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Boris SOKOL

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MYTHS AND REALITY

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Moscow  
"YAUZA"  
"EKSMO"  
2005

BBC 66.1(0) C  
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Design of the artist's series /1. Valkova

Sokolov B.  
S59 Third Reich. Myths and reality. — M.: Yauza, Eksmo, 2005. —  
480 p. [5VM 5-699-10227-2

The book of the well-known writer and historian - the subverter of myths Boris  
Sokolov is dedicated to the state, which existed for a little more than 12 years, but left  
on its own

terrible memory. of all mankind. It is not surprising that the history of the Third Reich is full of myths. From the book, the reader will learn what were the true goals of the leaders of the Reich, how the Second World War was being prepared, how many victims of the Holocaust actually were and how the number of © million Jews who died as a result of the Nazi genocide was born, how many people lost humanity in the war unleashed by Hitler whether Stalin was going to attack Hitler, whether Hitler was a commander and whether Germany could have won the war, what was the essence of the racial doctrine of National Socialism and how the Nazis treated various peoples, what were the real and imaginary crimes of the Third Reich and whether gas chambers in Auschwitz, how Hitler's personality influenced the organization of the Nazi state, what was in this state from ancient mystical teachings, and what was from the rational twentieth century, and much more.

This book is intended for anyone who wants to solve the main mysteries of the Third Reich and the Second World War.

BBC 66.1(0)

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## Introduction

On September 4, 1934, Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler declared at the Congress of the National Socialist German Workers' Party in Nuremberg: "The German order of life is indisputably predetermined for a thousand years." But the state created by the Fuhrer, designed to exist for at least the next thousand years, but perished under the blows of the Allied armies after only 12 years and three months, left behind more myths than any other state formation that existed in XX century. It aroused sympathy for few people, although its fans still exist and are distinguished by solidarity, militancy and aggressiveness. And at the same time, as some kind of majestic evil, evil in its ultimate incarnation, still arouses the burning interest of millions and millions of people who have no particular sympathy for Nazism and Hitler. Most of the myths are of a negative nature and are rooted in the anti-fascist propaganda carried out in Germany and Europe in the 1930s, as well as in wartime allied propaganda, which sought in every possible way to discredit and humiliate the enemy, to expose him in the most disgusting light. There is another category of myths, so to speak, positive ones. They arose both in Germany during the 12-year period of the Third Reich, and after the war among the right-wing

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publicists and historians who argued that there was no Holocaust, that the Nazi regime was no different from other authoritarian regimes that were so prevalent in Europe in the 1930s, that the German war was of a preventive nature and was supposed to destroy the plot of "American-English plutocrats", which often means "worldwide" Zionist (not to say "Jewish", which is not safe in Europe today) capital. The main statements of those historians who are called revisionists in Western Europe boil down to two main theses: there was no Holocaust, and Germany's war against Russia was purely defensive, preventive. Well, at the expense of defensive and preventive wars, the Russian émigré writer Mark Aldanov put it very well: "Offensive wars in history have never been and never will be: all wars are divided into defensive and "preventive" ones. But the Holocaust, unfortunately, was, about which there is too much evidence, each of which, in principle, can be faked, but the totality of which cannot be falsified by any nation or state.

To tell about all the myths and about how things really were, within the limits of one book, there is no way. Therefore, I will try to focus only on the most important and, in my opinion, the most interesting of them. For convenience of presentation, I arrange the myths according to the chronology of the history of the Third Reich and start a group of myths that is associated with the image of Adolf Hitler.

The reader should remember that truth usually lies somewhere in the middle between two myths, each of which isolates and exaggerates only one of its elements. And, destroying some myths, people immediately

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create others to replace them. The same thing is certainly happening in this book, although I, as the author, tried to avoid new myth-making as much as possible. It's all about the tutvimanent properties of human thinking. The very concept of "Third Reich" is a consequence of one of these archetypes, the

ancient - trinity. Hitler considered the empire of Charlemagne the first Reich, the second the Hohenzollern empire created by Bismarck in 1871, and the third his own, which was supposed to exist for at least the next thousand years and subjugate Europe to the Germanic race, and if you're lucky, then the whole world. At the same time, "three" is the simplest expression of asymmetry, according to the formula  $2+1=5$ . Our thinking is trinitarian, for which there are many examples, ranging from the Divine Trinity of Christianity and its analogues in other religions and ending with the trinity structures of almost all languages in the world - three Genders, three persons, a special role of the first three numerals, etc. e. The fact that human thinking is ternary is explained by the asymmetry of the functions of the two hemispheres of the brain. If human thinking were completely symmetrical, we would not have real free will and would forever be in the position of the Buridan donkey, which will die of hunger, since it is at an absolutely equal distance from two bundles of hay and, having absolute free will, he will not be able to choose one of them (this paradox is attributed to the French scholastic of the 16th century, Jean Buridan). The symmetry of the structure of the human body comes from nature, the asymmetry of thinking - from the mind, so that the trinity arises along with the emergence of thinking itself. The number "three" in our minds symbolizes a certain completeness, the completeness of something. Similarly, the Third Reich is conscious

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Hitler and his followers meant the completion of world history with the triumph of the German race "at least for the next thousand years", and ideally forever.

Also, the septenary is one of the most ancient stereotypes of human thinking, dating back to the seven luminaries of the solar system, known from antiquity. Without the help of optical instruments, a person can see the Moon, Mercury, Mars, Venus, Jupiter, Uranus and Saturn in the night sky. Accordingly, along with the Earth and the Sun, people of antiquity knew seven objects of the solar system. Hence the seven days of the week, seven notes, as well as septenary structures in the mythology and folklore of all the peoples of the Earth, including the Seven Days of Creation in the Bible, or the Seven Secrets of the Koran, or the seven hills on which many world capitals allegedly arose, the same Rome and Moscow. It is no coincidence that in the system of digital magic created by Pifla Horus, the number "seven" personified the Cosmos. Seven is an archetype younger than three, but also very ancient. It arose when

for the first time a man began to carefully peer into the starry sky. And this happened when people were not yet divided by languages. Since the septenary is present in the myths of absolutely all peoples, it means that it was fixed in human thinking when all mankind still spoke the same primordial language, now hopelessly lost. Septenary structures are also inevitably present in the mythology of the Third Reich. In particular, the leadership of the National Socialist Party initially consisted of seven people, and rumor stubbornly attributed to Hitler that when he first came to the pub, where six people gathered - the leaders and the only members of the German Workers

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Party (DAP) - the predecessor of the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany (NSDAP), then he was given a membership card number 7, and then he later succeeded, when he became the sole leader of the party, to be changed to a membership card number 1. In fact, this has nothing to do with reality, except that at one time, in the early 1920s, the number of leaders of the Nazi Party was seven people. And I advise lovers of mysticism to think about whether Hitler's political rise was influenced by the fact that immediately after the end of the First World War he became a corporal not of any kind, namely the 7th company of the 1st reserve battalion of the 2nd Bavarian infantry regiment. Accordingly, in my explanation of myths, I tried to avoid the ternary and septenary categories as far as possible, as they relate to the peculiarities of my thinking, and not to the essence of the objects under study. But besides the trinity and septenary, there are still a lot of other archetypes of thinking, far from being known by man and affecting not only his consciousness, but also his subconsciousness. Therefore, any researcher subconsciously still gives rise to myths, because it is more convenient for a person to think with myths. Both Hitler and his associates knew this very well and used it to achieve their not the most noble goals.

As Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke notes, "A small, fanatical party succeeded in seizing power in a European country and spreading its influence over a vast territory from the Atlantic coast to the Caucasus Mountains, while considering the extermination of the Jews as its main task. The scale of these events distinguishes national socialism from other plots of modern history.

Usually the Third Reich is imagined as a monstrous monster  
- a devourer of people,

strangers and their own, where even in peacetime life was unbearable. Not so numerous today apologists for Hitler and racial theory, on the contrary, argue that the Hitler Reich was an almost ideal state, where all Germans were happy and contented, only Jews were dissatisfied, who were really limited in their rights and were oppressed, and in part - for the cause, because in the previous decades and centuries, the "indigenous people" were ousted from business, art, the media, and even from the sphere of public administration. At the same time, many Jews, despite the persecution, until 1938, until Kristallnacht, did not intend to leave Germany, hoping that Hitler would not last long, and then, with the outbreak of World War II, it was already too late. As the famous photographer Helmut Newton recalled, "The most far-sighted German Jews went into exile already in 1933 and 1934, but many did not realize the magnitude of the threat. Hitler said everything about his beliefs in My Struggle, but then no one read My Struggle. When I was fifteen years old (in 1935. - B.S.), I realized: "This will not change. We need to leave." Newton eventually decided to leave his homeland and survived, while the vast majority of German Jews became victims of the Holocaust. But, the revisionists assert, no one exterminated this pernicious "small people". Is that only thirty thousand saboteurs and saboteurs. Jews only wanted to be evicted from Germany. To Madagascar or somewhere else. Yes, the war got in the way. But there was no Holocaust! Just a few Jews died of starvation, cold and disease. And generally speaking

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the fate of the Jews is a trifle compared with the majestic plans for the organization of a just and perfect world, headed by the best of all the Germanic race. And this state, which really could exist on earth for a thousand years, fell victim to the conspiracy of the Anglo-American plutocrats and the Soviet Bolsheviks, who provoked the Second World War. And the plutocrats and Bolsheviks, in turn, were spurred into this ill-fated enterprise by the Jews, who occupied a prominent place among both. And the Third Reich fell like a noble knight in the fight against superior enemy forces, and his death was majestic and filled even the enemies with sacred awe, like Wagner's operas. Reality, as always, is not reducible to either of the two myths. Yes, Hitler and the National Socialists committed heinous crimes against many

peoples of the world, including their own, German, destroyed millions of innocent people, trampled and liquidated democratic institutions, unleashed the greatest, most bloody war in history, in the fire of which the Third Reich perished. But at the same time, the vast majority of German inhabitants in the early years of the New Reich felt quite comfortable. Thanks to military orders and public works, unemployment was eliminated. Adolf Hitler freed Germany from the oppression of reparations. He reunited the Saarland with the Reich. He began to implement the project "To every German - a car." And the Germans thought that only the war imposed on Germany prevented them from getting the "people's car" - the "Volkswagen". The Anschluss of Austria, and the capture of the Sudetenland, and then the whole of the Czech Republic, and at the same time Memel, were welcomed by the mass of the German people. The Germans were pleased to know

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that they live in Greater Germany, that the fetters of the Treaty of Versailles have been shattered, that almost all persons of German blood have at last been reunited in a single and indivisible Reich. With a few exceptions - Danzig and some border Polish lands. And when a world war broke out over Danzig, the vast majority of Germans welcomed it. No one heard the voices of critically thinking individuals, and there was not the slightest opportunity to express such opinions publicly. Then the Germans welcomed the conquest of Poland, France, Denmark, Norway, the Balkans. They began to think only after losing the battle for Britain, and especially after the blitzkrieg against the USSR failed. I'm not talking about Stalingrad. And the vast majority of Germans did not know about the crimes of the Nazis. They knew that the Jews were being resettled somewhere in the East, but that they were being exterminated there, only tens of thousands, involved in the implementation of the "final solution", knew, but by no means millions. At the same time, many soldiers of the Wehrmacht and SS field units fought courageously at the front, performed heroic deeds, believing that they were doing it in the name of Germany. Also in the rear, many workers worked courageously under unfriendly bombs. Although their labor was side by side with the forced labor of foreign workers and prisoners of war. But some Germans mocked the "Ostovtsy", others sympathized and even helped them. Some were imbued with the racial theory of the Nazis, others condemned them, although they were afraid to speak out loud. In general, life in the Third Reich was quite diverse and contradictory, despite the total ideological leveling and thorough brainwashing by the Goebbels propaganda machine.

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It must also be remembered that Hitler would not have been able to unleash the same World War II if it were not for the voluntary or involuntary help from his future opponents. On the part of England and France, these actions were rather involuntary, but on the part of the Soviet Union, they were carefully calculated. Chamberlain and Daladier hoped that Hitler could be "appeased" at the expense of territories with a predominantly German population and thereby avoid a new world war, for which the Western democracies in the late 1930s were not prepared either morally or materially. Stalin, concluding a pact with Hitler, was well aware that he was leading to the early start of the Second World War, but he only needed this to expand the sphere of his own domination. Needless to say, the Germans in the era of the Third Reich committed a lot of war crimes and crimes against humanity. But it must be admitted that war crimes were also committed against the Germans, primarily by the soldiers of the Red Army and by their Western allies. The strategic bombing of Germany, and in particular the destruction of Dresden in February 1945, was far more brutal and resulted in a significantly higher number of civilian casualties than the bombing of Belgrade, Coventry and a number of other cities of the Luftwaffe, which were incriminated by the defendants at the Nuremberg Trials . And the Soviet Union, which shot V. In 1940, more than 20,000 Polish military and civilian prisoners, like the Third Reich, managed to mark themselves in the field of crimes against humanity, although on a smaller scale. All this is not said to justify the atrocities of the Nazis. They are majestic and undeniable. But the trouble is that the crimes of others

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nations pale against the backdrop of Hitler. And don't forget about them either. On February 15-14, 1945, 1,350 Anglo-American bombers, including the "flying super-fortresses" B-29, wiped Dresden off the face of the earth - a city in which there were no military installations. More than 6,000 tons of bombs were dropped on Dresden. According to various estimates, from 60 to 135 thousand inhabitants of the city perished.



I do not think that the burning of Dresden is an episode of the war that the British and American Air Forces can be proud of. Not to mention Katyn. And for these crimes, too, it is worth offering official apologies to the defeated or, in the case of the Poles, to the enslaved.

## Creator of the Third Reich

Adolf Hitler is rightfully considered the architect and creator of the Third Reich and the Second World War, which is closely related to it. It is not surprising that many myths arose around this person. The first myth was that Adolf Hitler was not the man he claimed to be and that his real name was Schicklgruber. This is an ancient mythological motif - the villain, in order to be unrecognized, is called by a different name. In fact, Adolf Hitler never bore the surname Schicklgruber. Here, his father Alois really bore the surname Schicklgruber until the age of 39, but then in 1876 he was officially adopted by his actual father, the peasant Johann Nepomuk Hüttler, and when writing in the church book, Hüttler was transformed into Hitler. Born in 1889, the son Adolf was immediately recorded by Hitler. Just as untenable

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allegations of Hitler's Jewish origins are a popular thesis of allied propaganda during the war. It is based on the fact that the surname Hitler is quite common among both Germans and Jews. In confirmation, the newspapers of the 50s and 40s repeatedly showed photographs of tombstones of various Hitlers from Jewish cemeteries - allegedly relatives of Adolf. There were also legends that either Hitler or his father was the illegitimate son of some Jewish merchant or manufacturer. They even named one of the Rothschild bankers. Such fabrications have nothing to do with reality. This was well shown in his biography of Hitler by the German historian Werner Maser. Based on surviving church books, he restored Hitler's genealogy in detail and found out that all of his ancestors came from the peasants of Lower Austria.

A wide variety of illnesses were attributed to Hitler, ranging from syphilis to paranoia, mental illness and Parkinson's disease. The Fuhrer was awarded a variety of sexual

disorders and perversions: impotence, homosexuality, sadism, masochism, caprophages to her, love for the "golden rain". There is no documentary evidence or any reliable evidence that Hitler suffered from any of the above. On the contrary, it is reliably known that even before Eva Braun he had a number of mistresses, and he did not kill any of them (including his niece), and one of them, the French wife Charlotte Lobzhul, in March 1918 gave birth to him son Jean Marie, who was still alive at least in the early 1980s. The extant fragments of the diary of Eva Braun, a longtime love

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Hitler's women, who became his wife before the very end, testify that the Fuhrer was quite wealthy as a man, but at the same time he did not allow anything extravagant in the field of sex. He never suffered from either hereditary or acquired syphilis, for the tests regularly carried out during his tenure as Reich Chancellor invariably showed a negative result for Wassermann's reaction. The trembling of the hands observed in Hitler in the last year of his life could be the result not of Parkinson's disease, but of the shell shock he experienced during the assassination attempt on July 20, 1944. All the ailments that gripped Hitler in the last years of the war are easily explained by the colossal nervous and physical tension and severe stress caused by the defeats of the Wehrmacht. At the same time, as we will show below, all the decisions made by Hitler, up to the last day, were rational in their own way, and many were even the only possible ones in the circumstances that were very unfavorable for the Reich. Ilya Ehrenburg in the 1941 feuilleton "Mad Wolves" wrote about Hitler this way: "He speaks hysterically, shakes his fists, going into a rage, spits out long incantations in a patter. This is a shaman, but a shaman of a special type - cunning and calculating. It seems to the crowd that he is in ecstasy, but he, splashing saliva, is considering something. When he talks to Krupp or to the bosses of the Steel Trust, Herr Vogler, he does not shout or spit, he is accustomed to speaking respectfully to the kings of the Ruhr. His passion is lies. He lies hourly, lies his diploma there and with his helpers, lies when he writes and when he speaks - he cannot help but lie ... He is vengeful and evil ben. He killed his best friends led by Rem. He ordered the torture of journalists who once

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spoke disrespectfully of him. This is a bad comedian. He built himself a palace on a mountain (if on the plain, obviously, everything would be in order. - B.S.). For a rooted killer, he is a vegetarian: he is offended by the suffering of lambs and oxen.

I note that there is nothing wrong with Hitler's vegetarianism, as well as his love for animals (by the way, Hitler banned the ritual slaughter of cattle in Germany because of the painful way in which it is produced). Mankind does not curse him for this. But the idea of Hitler as a shaman seems too primitive. The Fuhrer was by no means a primitive person. After all, he created a harmonious state in his own way (in some ways more harmonious than the Soviet one related to it), based on racial theory, although having nothing to do with science, but very effective in terms of propaganda. Hitler also possessed good skills as a strategist, and as a diplomat he outplayed many European politicians, such as Chamberlain and Daladier. Ehrenburg, of course, had no idea exactly how Hitler talked to the captains of German business. However, these are the inevitable costs of wartime propaganda.

The notion that Hitler's actions were irrational, that he was guided in his activities primarily by astrology and mystical insights, has little in common with the true state of affairs. Hitler had only an irrational goal - the world domination of the Aryan race, but by no means the means of achieving it - military, political and diplomatic.

Just as untenable are the accusations of Hitler of cowardice, that his awards from the time of the First

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World War II, he earned only thanks to the good attitude of his commanders. First, the Iron Cross 1st Class rarely complained to enlisted or non-commissioned officers. This was not the order that a corporal could be awarded for beautiful eyes. Enough documents and evidence have been preserved, made long before Hitler came to power, and confirming that the future Fuhrer was a brave soldier of the First World War, the best liaison in his 16th Bavarian Infantry Regiment. So, in the presentation to the Iron Cross of the 1st degree, signed by Lieutenant Colonel von Go-

Dean on July 31, 1918, it was noted: "Being a messenger (Hitler was a scooter, that is, a messenger on a bicycle. - B.S.), in the conditions of both positional and maneuver warfare, he was an example of cold blood and courage and was always called volunteer to deliver the necessary orders in the most difficult situations with the greatest danger to life. When all lines of communication were cut off in heavy fighting, the most important messages, despite all obstacles, were delivered to their destination thanks to Hitler's tireless and courageous behavior. Hitler was awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class for the Battle of Vitschet 2.12. 1914. I believe that he is absolutely worthy of being awarded the Iron Cross, 1st class." If Hitler had remained just a brave soldier of the First World War, if after its completion he had struck not politics, but into painting and architecture, as he dreamed of in his youth, he would have remained a worthy German citizen, a respected veteran, even if he had not become an outstanding architect and painter. But here numerous "if only" arise ... If it were not for what Hitler did in February 1933

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an actual coup d'état, if he had not unleashed the Second World War and conducted it in violation of all generally accepted norms and rules, if he had not destroyed democracy, if he had not persecuted Jews and Gypsies, if he had not considered the majority of the Slavic peoples to be nations of the second varieties worthy of being only slaves to the German superhumans.

"My Struggle" - Truth and Myth

Hitler's main work - the book "My Struggle", which became the bible of National Socialism, gave rise to a large number of myths. In the National Socialist state, it was interpreted as the New German Testament - instead of the Christian one, as a text that was not subject to any criticism, as an absolutely whole, non-contradictory thing, carrying the ultimate truth, a new revelation, the meaning of life and a guide to action, and, of course, brilliant from a literary point of view. The opponents of Hitler and National Socialism, in their turn, considered "My Struggle" as a text that inspires only disgust and horror, a text full of irreconcilable internal contradictions, written in a completely murderous language from a literary point of view and containing fair portions of lies. and slander.

Since Hitler is a bad person, and "struggle" is a good word, especially if it is combined with the word "revolutionary", then, first of all, in the Soviet Union, as well as in some other countries, where it is generally customary to translate the names of foreign language names into their native language. works, the name of Hitler's work was given without translation - "Mein Kampf", so as not to

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associate the noble word "struggle" with the name of Hitler. Thanks to this, the title of the devil's book remained ominously incomprehensible, and on the other hand, unique, so that Hitler's book could not be confused with any other written in a different language. Although, for example, neither in the USSR nor in modern Russia does it occur to anyone to give the title of the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels without translation. The truth, as is usually the case, lies somewhere between the two myths. I do not know German well enough to judge the literary merits or demerits of Hitler's Mein Kampf. The current translations into Russian are frankly weak, and, apparently, by no means due to the fact that they scrupulously convey the features of the original. But even a bad translation exudes quite strong energy. There was probably even more energy in the original. And it is unlikely that a languid and badly written book could inspire millions and induce them to support Hitler and his party. You will not refuse "My struggle" and the integrity of the views of the author. Hitler was generally not inclined to reflection, although he wrote his main book in the memoir genre, conducive to reflection. Give the place where the book was created for reflection was the most suitable: Landsberg Prison. But the public addressed by Hitler, like himself, did not respect the reflective intellectuals. There were, of course, many misconceptions and false statements in the book, but they dealt with the causes of Germany's defeat in the First World War and the substantiation of the malignity of the lower races. Here is the legend about the "stab in the back with a dagger" in the fall of 1918 from the side of the Social Democrats and other leftists of the "victorious

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German army," and endowing the Jews with all thoughts

serious vices, accusing them of a worldwide conspiracy (helped by the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" - Hitler was introduced to them by one of the ideologists of National Socialism, an emigrant from Russia, the Baltic German Alfred Rosenberg), in an effort to destroy the high culture created by the German race, and attributing to the "Aryans" all the main discoveries and cultural achievements of mankind. But, let me emphasize, well, in this case, we are faced with a sincere delusion, and not a lie or slander. For Hitler himself and his followers sincerely believed in all these myths and acted in accordance with them. This was the irrationality of the goals of National Socialism, for the achievement of which, however, quite rational means were used, ranging from the latest weapons systems to a carefully organized system of concentration camps and pre-designed measures to implement the "final solution of the Jewish question". ". By the way, the irrationalism of the goals of National Socialism was very clearly manifested in the Holocaust, sometimes even neglecting completely rational reasons. In particular, the Sonderkommandos in the occupied Soviet territory often exterminated even Jewish artisans, despite the protests of the Wehrmacht command, which indicated that these Jews were fulfilling orders for the needs of the German army and that their destruction should at least be postponed.

At the same time, in Mein Kampf, Hitler was quite frank about his plans for ex-  
, pensions in Europe and made no secret of the fact that the Germanic race destined to dominate the world and that in the future German state, Jews and Slavs will have oh how hard it is. The trouble was that for the time being

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But many European politicians did not want to take seriously all these cannibalistic revelations.

My Struggle played about the same role for the National Socialists as Lenin's State and Revolution played for the Russian Bolsheviks. In the book, mostly written while he was in Landsberg prison in 1924, Hitler laid the foundations for the future National Socialist state and its ideology, and predicted the victory of the National Socialist revolution. At the same time, it was Bolshevism that was proclaimed the main enemy of National Socialism, and Russia and the limitrophe states were the main objects

for the acquisition by the German people of the missing living space. He wrote bluntly: "We National Socialists are consciously drawing a line under the foreign policy direction of our pre-war policy. We pick up where we left off six hundred years ago. We put an end to the eternal German striving towards the south and west of Europe and turn our gaze to the country in the East. We are finally parting with the colonial and commercial policy of the pre-war period and moving on to the territorial policy of the future.

When we talk today in Europe about new lands, we can first of all think only about Russia and the border states subordinate to it ... "

Hitler immediately blamed the aggression on the potential victims of German expansionism: "In Russian Bolshevism, we must see the attempt made in the twentieth century by the Jews to win world domination ...

Germany is today the immediate major goal of Bolshevism. It will take all the strength of the young missionary idea to raise our people to

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liberation from the fetters of this international snake and stop the internal contamination of our blood in order to direct the liberating forces of the nation to the preservation of our national spirit, which could prevent the repetition of the last catastrophes in the very distant future.

Both the Russian revolution of 1917 and the German revolution of 1918 were considered by Hitler to be destructive, undoubtedly harmful, leading society to chaos and giving power to the harmful "small people". Hitler insisted: "By a successful coup d'état, we, contrary to the unprincipled German lawyers, mean not just the transfer of state power into the hands of gentlemen of the revolutionaries, but we understand only that revolutionary action that brought good results for the nation and created better conditions for it than the previous one. mode. Nothing of the kind can, of course, be said about the unfortunate events of 1918, which were the result of the tricks of bandits, and not at all a great revolution. But if the conquest of political power is the most important prerequisite for the practical implementation of the reformist intentions of a given movement, then it is clear that this movement, from the very first days of its inception, must be aware and feel itself to be a movement of the masses, a non-literary tea-drinking club, or a society. where they play skittles.

He considered the National Socialist Revolution aimed at preserving the world's cultural heritage. The Fuhrer stated: "The goal of a truly healthy revolution is not simply to destroy everything old, but only to remove the bad and obsolete and continue to build further on those parts of the foundation that remain."

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fit. This is the only way to understand the progress of mankind. Otherwise, our world would never have emerged from chaos."

It cannot be said that Hitler was completely wrong here. Lenin and Stalin, as well as Trotsky and Zinoviev, were characterized by the desire for world domination under the flag of the world proletarian revolution, which was to be given all possible support by the Red Army. Another thing is that already in the mid-1920s, Jews in the top party leadership were relegated to secondary roles, and the myth of their supposedly decisive influence on Stalin's policy had to be supported with the help of all sorts of demonization of the figure of Lazar Kaganovich, the only remaining member of the Politburo from among Jews, and the invention of the legend that Kaganovich's sister Roza was Stalin's wife. In fact, Kaganovich never had a sister named Rosa, and none of the sisters of Lazar Moiseevich, either blood or cousins or three relatives, was ever a Stalinist wife or mistress.

At the same time, the Führer, with all his hatred for the "Marxists" - the Social Democrats and Communists, borrowed a lot from them in the planetary tactics of the political struggle, and especially in the art of manipulating the masses. Hitler borrowed from the Soviet Bolsheviks the idea of mass terror as a means of eliminating any opposition to the dictatorship of the party and its leader. In Mein Struggle, Hitler justified the "interests of the people" in the need to use both legal and illegal methods of struggle. In this he followed his teachers, the Social Democrats and the Bolsheviks: "Only that state power has the right to respect and support, which

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toraya expresses the aspirations and feelings of the people, or at least does not harm them ...

When the power of government uses all the means at its disposal to lead an entire people to destruction, then it is not only the right but also the duty of every son of the people to revolt...

Each government authority will, of course, insist on maintaining its state authority, no matter how badly it expresses the aspirations of the people and no matter how much it betrays them right and left. What remains to be done by the real spokesmen of the people's aspirations and aspirations? In this case, the instinct of self-preservation will tell the popular movement that in the struggle for freedom and independence, one should also use those means by which the enemy himself tries to maintain his dominance. It follows from this that the struggle will be waged by legal means only as long as the government keeps to the legal framework, but the movement will not be afraid of illegal means of struggle, since the oppressors of the people also resort to them.

And the Führer emphasized: "In the future, so that we can count on success, we must use the most severe means of struggle."

However, as is known, the NSDAP came to power in a completely legal way, through democratic elections. But when the power was in the hands of the Nazis, they began to very widely use non-parliamentary methods in everything to eliminate their opponents, starting with the use of the Reichstag fire as a pretext for establishing a one-party dictatorship and terror against the opposition and ending with the complete liquidation of all non-parliamentary and state political activity.

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Hitler rejected parliamentary democracy under the pretext that "the parliamentary principle of decision by majority vote destroys the authority of the individual and puts in its place the quantity contained in this or that crowd. In this way, parliamentarism sins against the basic idea of aristocracy in nature, and, of course, aristocracy does not necessarily have to be personified by the modern degenerate social elite. To the personalities of the parliamentarians, whether German, Austrian or any other, the future Führer had boundless contempt: "The smaller this kind of spiritual dwarf and political huckster, the clearer to him his own squalor, the more he will appreciate that system, which is by no means required

there is neither genius nor the strength of a giant who generally values the cunning of a village headman above the wisdom of Pericles. At the same time, this type does not have to suffer a bit over the question of responsibility. This gives him the less worries, since he knows in advance that regardless of these or other results of his "state" filth, the end of his career will be the same: one fine day, he will still have to give way to the same powerful mind, like himself.

It is always a great consolation to a gathering of such "people's representatives" to see at the head of a man whose mental qualities stand on the same level as their own. Only in this case, each of these gentlemen can give himself the cheap joy from time to time to show that the ion is stupid. And most importantly, then each of them does not have the right to think: if any X can lead us, then why is not any Y, why Stefan is worse than Johann?

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This democratic tradition is most consistent with the shameful phenomenon of our day, namely, the desperate cowardice of a large number of our so-called leaders. Indeed, what happiness for such people in all cases of serious decisions to be able to hide behind the back of the so-called majority.

When Hitler rejected the democratic principle of society, he was quite sincere. The Fuhrer considered himself a brilliant personality, whom the will of the crowd - the people can only interfere with. He must lead the masses, and not at all depend on their choice and opinion. When Hitler spoke of his party's intentions to stand on the ground of legality and to respect democratic principles and institutions, he was not blunt. After the failure of the Munich Putsch of 1925, the Fuhrer became convinced that the Nazis would not come to power by force and would have to fight for voters by legal means - with the help of newspapers, brochures, leaflets, rallies and meetings, where he could fully use his oratorical gift and the ability to hypnotize and fire up the crowd.

To the "rotten" Austrian, French or British democracy, Hitler contrasted "German democracy", which, in his opinion, consisted in "the free choice of a leader with the obligation for the latter to take full personal responsibility for his actions. There is no room here for a majority vote on individual issues;

only one person, who is then responsible for his decisions with all his property and life.

If it will be objected to me that under such conditions it is difficult to find a person who will devote himself to such a risky task, then I will answer this:

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“Thank God, this is the whole point of German democracy, that under it the first unworthy candidate and moral coward who comes across cannot come to power - the enormity of responsibility scares away the ignoramuses and cowards.”

Hitler did not doubt at all that such a person exists and that the people know him - this, of course, is himself. He alone is capable of taking full and undivided responsibility for the future of the Reich and the German race.

However, this confidence did not prevent the Führer from looking realistically at the political situation. In particular, he emphasized that propaganda should take into account the characteristics of different segments of the population, each of which should be offered its own product: “Propaganda should always appeal only to the masses. For the intelligentsia, or for those who are now called intelligentsia, what is needed is not propaganda, but scientific knowledge ... The task of propaganda is not to give a scientific education to individual individuals, but to influence the masses, to make them understandable certain important, although not numerous, facts, events, needs, about which the masses still had no idea.

From democracy, the National Socialist state was to be completely free both in content and in form. Hitler wrote in Mein Kampf: “The state is a means to an end. Its own goal is to preserve and further develop the collective of human beings who are identical in physical and moral respects. This preservation applies primarily only to the nucleus, which really belongs to the given race and ensures the development of those forces that are inherent in this race. Part of this core will

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ensure the preservation of physical life, and the other part - to promote further spiritual development. In fact, one part creates the preconditions necessary for the other.

A state that does not serve this purpose is something ugly and doomed to destruction. The very fact of its existence proves nothing. After all, no one will say that the success of a gang of filibusters can justify robbery as an institution.

We National Socialists, as fighters for a new world outlook, must never set foot on the notorious "ground of facts", and besides, false facts. Otherwise, we would not be fighters for a new great idea, but miserable slaves of modern lies. We must learn to distinguish most rigorously between the state as a known vessel and the race as the contents of that vessel. This vessel generally has any meaning only when it really has the ability to preserve and protect the contents. Otherwise, the vessel

this one is worth nothing.

So, the highest goal of a truly people's state should be concern for the preservation of that basic racial core, which alone is capable of creating culture, giving beauty, dignity and everything high to humanity. We Aryans understand by the state only the living organism of a race, which not only ensures the very existence of this race, but also ensures the possibility of a further higher development of all the abilities inherent in it to the degree of the highest freedom.

This is what the state should be. What is now being imposed on us under the name "state" is only the saddest product of grave human delusions. Well, an inevitable companion

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these delusions are the indescribable suffering of the people.

We National Socialists are fully aware that, in defending the higher developed views on the role of the state, we act as revolutionaries, which we are stigmatized at every step. However, we think and act completely irrespective of how our contemporaries react to us: whether they applaud us or condemn us.

The Hitler movement from the very beginning

it was as hostile to democracy and relied on layers that were wary of democracy - on artisans, peasants, the most conservative circles of workers who did not fall under the influence of social democrats and communists, on wartime officers, who often could not find their place in the Weimar Republic. This was the essential difference between: the National Socialist Party in Germany and the Bolshevik Party in Russia. The latter grew out of the Russian revolutionary movement, which fought against the autocracy under democratic slogans.

The Bolsheviks kept these slogans in their arsenal, without refusing in their documents the very word "Democracy". Of course, the Soviet communists had nothing to do with democracy in practice and far surpassed the German National Socialists in terms of the degree of total control over society. However, the democratic decorum was respected in the Soviet Communist Party, therefore, in particular, local party leaders, who were actually appointed by higher party authorities, were allegedly formally elected by local party leaders. At the same time, although the real power belonged to party workers - secretaries

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republican party organizations, regional committees, city committees, etc. in the same regions and republics, the organs of Soviet power, which formally headed them, also remained as a "screen". In the Third Reich, democratic games were not played, and the dualism of party and state bodies was not allowed. The leaders of the party organizations in the districts - Gau - Gau Leiters were not elected, but appointed personally by Hitler. At the same time, they quite officially concentrated both party and state power in their hands.

Both in the USSR and in Germany there was a cult of the leader. But at the same time, Stalin never publicly or in a narrow circle tried to justify the special role of the leader in the Soviet state. Hitler, on the other hand, spoke directly about the exceptional role and qualities of the leader - the Fuhrer, concentrating power over the state, party and people in his hands, meaning, of course, himself. Thus, on March 51, 1942, he stated at his headquarters in East Prussia: "Under our present form of government, the term "Fuhrer" is best suited to name the head of state. Among other things, this emphasizes that the elected leader of the German people is at the head of the state ... The word "fu-

rer" we are not allowed to throw, and it alone must have a unique value.

In Mein Struggle, Hitler eagerly picked up the "stab in the back" legend as the main reason for Germany's defeat in World War I, so popular among the German military and right-wing political parties. Of course, Hitler also noted that the blame for the past world war should be placed on the countries of the Entente, not recognizing even the slightest share of German guilt, because

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only such a thesis will have unconditional success with the majority of the population of the Reich. He wrote: "It was a huge mistake of principle to raise the question of the perpetrators of the war in such a way that not only Germany, but also other countries are to blame. No, we had to tirelessly propagate the idea that the blame lies entirely and exclusively with the opponents. This had to be done even if it was not true. Meanwhile, Germany was not actually to blame for the fact that the war began ...

Popular feelings are not complex, they are very simple and monotonous. There is no room for particularly subtle differentiation here. The people say "yes" or "no"; he loves or hates. Truth or lie! Right or wrong! People talk straight. He has no

catchiness".

In his main literary work, Hitler affirmed the Aryan priority in all major areas of culture: "All human culture, all the achievements of art, science and technology, which we are witnessing today, are almost exclusively the fruits of Aryan creativity. This fact alone quite reasonably confirms the conclusion that it was the Aryan who was the founder of higher humanism, and, consequently, the prototype of everything that we understand by the word "man". He is the Prometheus of mankind, from whose bright brow sparks of genius flew at all times, always rekindling the fire of knowledge, illuminating the darkness of gloomy ignorance, which allowed man to rise above all other creatures of the Earth ... It was he who laid the foundations and erected the walls all the great edifices of human culture."

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In Germany, after 1933, the cult of the Fuhrer was quite naturally established. It was reflected, for example, in Goering's radio address of May 20, 1942. Nazi No. 2 declared: "The German people are active because the Führer leads them and part of it, and also because the Almighty has blessed us by giving us a Führer - an unknown soldier of the World War, who, having nothing but his own strength, alone, thanks to only to himself, has now become not only the powerful Fuhrer of the German nation, but already the Fuhrer of Europe; Do you think that Providence is so stupid and capricious to give such a Fuhrer to the people and make sure that he saves the people from immeasurable disasters - and all this only in order to bring him down at some point into the abyss? No, I know the faith of the German people, who heed the warnings of fate and follow them. It does not know that someone can now say: "We have a great Fuhrer, let him work," and then roll over on the other side and sleep on. No, all this imposes on us the obligation of constant readiness and -

the most important thing is readiness, which must be dictated by your own heart, otherwise it will not be worth anything.

Goering himself, it seems, did not believe too fanatically in Hitler, for at the end of the war he tried to start negotiations with the Western Allies in order to save himself and the Reich, and in fact tried to remove Hitler from the post of head of the party and state, for which he was cursed by the Fuhrer, who had previously considered his closest friend, removed from all posts and expelled from the party in a political testament. But many millions of Germans sincerely believed Hitler to the very end. Goebbels made sure that every German family had a copy of Mein Kampf. instance

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books usually lay in a conspicuous place, testifying to the trustworthiness of its owner, but the vast majority of Hitler's work was not read not only by Jews, but also by Germans - primarily because of the large volume. On the other hand, "My Struggle" became the source of slogans and program guidelines for all 12 years of the short and turbulent existence of the Third Reich.

National Socialism and German Capital

There is a legend that Adolf Hitler and his party were almost puppets and mercenaries of the German

Mansian big business, that the Fuhrer and his associates were simply hired by big business to carry out certain political tasks. These statements have nothing to do with reality.

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Hitler and the Nazis were suspicious of large financial capital, partly due to the huge proportion of Jews among the world's financial magnates. Accordingly, German capitalists, including pure-blooded Aryans, were suspicious of the NSDAP, which called for a fight against "plutocrats". After coming to power, the National Socialists proclaimed the priority in the economy of productive, "pure" capital, which, as Hitler argued in "My Struggle", "is the last product of creative labor", over financial, "speculative" or "usurious" capital. , equipped with the devastating epithet "Jewish". The leader of the Nazis considered it necessary to remove stock exchange capital from the national economy and "to start a fight against the internationalization of the German economy without opening

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waging at the same time the struggle against capital in general as a factor necessary for the preservation of an independent national economy. National German capital was to play the leading role in the Reich, and then throughout the world.

Hitler adopted the ideas of the economist and one of the founders of the NSDAP, Gottfried Feder, whose lectures he first listened to back in 1919. Subsequently, the Fuhrer praised him in "My Struggle": "Feder's merit in my eyes was that he, with ruthless consistency, completely exposed the speculative nature of exchange and loan capital and nailed its usurious essence to a stake. His lectures were so correct in their fundamental part that not a single critic challenged the theoretical correctness of the lecturer's conclusions. People only asked themselves the question of how practical implementation of Feder's ideas was possible. But what in the eyes of others was the weak side of Federov's lectures, in my eyes was their strength.

In principle, finance capital, like big capital in general, played a subordinate role in the National Socialist state. The economy was focused on preparing for war and autarchy, which is why financial indicators, and above all



true, lost their meaning. Capitalists could neither export profits to other countries, nor freely invest them within the country.

This is how General Frido von Senger-Etterlin assessed the Fuhrer's activities in the economic sphere: "Hitler's successes seemed to testify in his favor. He really solved the most difficult problem for Europe - he eliminated unemployment. He built wonderful roads and revived the economy.

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Miku, starting the production of weapons, building barracks and announcing a call for military service. No one explained to the people that most of his program included unproductive labor, the results of which could not increase the welfare of the country, since the product of this labor could not be exported ... The purchasing power of the state allegedly grew, because it printed money that could be spend. This led to the emergence of a new class of consumers and ensured the rise of the domestic market. But what was to happen when all the roads were built and the army was armed with the latest weapons?

The German capitalists quickly realized that under Hitler they had no real prospects, but they could do nothing.

At the same time, Germany did not fully use the tax system to finance the war, not introducing new taxes, but preferring open and hidden internal loans. As a result, by the end of the war, the internal state debt had reached 387 billion marks, of which about 60 billion marks were accounted for by internal loans. Businessmen had to share the burden of these loans with the state. Inflation ate up almost all the military profits of the concerns, since the mark was worth nothing outside of Germany. The former Minister of Finance, Count Lutz Schwerin von Krosigk, recalled: "Savings bank depositors remained unaware of the way in which they became state creditors. This system was based on the striving of the working people to accumulate and on the freezing of prices. Until 1943 ... the equivalent of accepted deposits was sent in the form of pensions and benefits to soldiers and their families or became a

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paid by the workers of the war industry, and after covering the necessary living expenses, went back to the banks and savings banks in the form of deposits and savings, and everything started all over again. Beginning in 1943, the population stopped visiting markets and shops, and money began to either turn into treasures or go to the black market, but not to savings banks, which is why money circulation was soon completely disrupted. When in 1944 the refugees and evacuees withdrew their savings from the cash registers, this system of credit suffered a complete collapse, and inflation, which had hitherto been artificially kept within certain limits, began to grow rapidly. Banks and insurance companies helped the state to extract funds from the population for waging war, but they themselves also could not use the profits from these operations, since they were also forced to give them to the state in the form of loans. As Schwerin von Krosigk notes, "Even in the preparatory period for the Kwoine, it was characteristic of German credit policy that it did not refer to the free capital market. She ... used the newly formed capital directly in the places of its accumulation. The conversion of idle funds into public debt obligations was carried out on the instructions of the Minister of Labor to insurance funds, the Minister of Economics to the transfer bank and the Department of Social Security to private charitable societies.

Thus, by the end of the war, German capital was forced to invest practically all its resources in meeting the military needs of the state, and already in 1945 the big capitalists had no doubts about the impending defeat of Germany. After the war, business in West Germany was forced

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to be revived practically from scratch — on state and foreign credits.

In late 1932 and early 1933, individual representatives of German big business did recommend to President Hindenburg that Hitler be appointed Reich Chancellor. They naively believed that Hitler would be able to ensure political stability in the country, and this, in turn, would have a favorable effect on the development of the economy. The capitalists

they believed that they would be able to control the Nazis with the help of the right-wing parties that entered the government coalition and subsequently remove Hitler from the post of Reich Chancellor. They hoped that the Moor would leave, having done his job. And Hitler did ensure political stability, but a very specific one, in which there was no place in the system of power for either opposition or big capital.

In Mein Struggle, Hitler also stated: "The state has nothing to do with a particular economic concept or development... The state is a racial organism, not an economic organization... The internal strength of the state coincides only in rare cases with the so-called economy. Economic prosperity; the latter, as countless examples testify, obviously points to the impending collapse of the state... Prussia confirms with exceptional clarity that it is not material means, but only ideological values that make it possible to create a state. Only with their presence can economic life develop favorably. Whenever there was a political upswing in Germany, economic conditions became the primary concern of the people, and ideological values faded into the background, the state fell apart and economic difficulties soon arose ...

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Until now, the state has never been based on peaceful economic means ... "

Yes, Hitler and the NSDAP accepted funds from individual representatives of German big business, no different in this from other political parties. Big business has never put all its eggs in one basket. But, by the way, other right-wing parties, such as Hugenberg's National People's Party, received an order of magnitude more money from businessmen than the NSDAP. The annual budget of the National Socialist Party at the beginning of the 1950s was, according to the maximum estimates of people who did not sympathize with Hitler in every way, from 70 to 90 million marks. And from the beginning of 1950 to the end of 1952, big business contributed 6 million marks to the NSDAP party fund. On an annualized basis, this amounted to less than 5% of the party budget - a drop in the bucket. So one should not overestimate the role of the bourgeoisie either in financing the NSDAP or in Hitler's rise to power.

Of course, the NSDAP program did not say anything about protecting the interests of the big bourgeoisie - this

could only scare away voters. But even when they came to power, the Nazis by no means danced to the tune of the capitalists. Hitler was generally not the kind of person who could obey someone's instructions and fulfill someone's requirements or even wishes. Certain measures of the new regime were certainly beneficial to big business, for example, the actual ban on strikes. But, at the same time, from now on, the owners of enterprises have lost the opportunity to arbitrarily dismiss workers, with the elimination of unemployment, the labor market has virtually disappeared. Entrepreneurs, especially those who were connected with the military-industrial complex, with the preparation and then with the conduct of the war, did receive high profits.

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whether. But at the same time, they were deprived of the opportunity both to export capital and to invest it arbitrarily within the Reich. The program of the Four Year Plan, and then the demands of the war started by Hitler, made it practically impossible for German industrialists and financiers to freely handle their capital. Beginning in 1943, in the second half of the war, when its unfavorable outcome for Germany was determined, many representatives of big business ended up in concentration camps, including the former president of the Reichsbank, Hjalmar Schacht. Many businessmen and spokesmen for their political interests were forced to leave Germany long before the start of the war. Thus, Alfred Hugenberg, the director of the Mining and Metallurgical Bank and the leader of the German National People's Party, already in June 1933 was forced to resign from the government and dissolve his party. Hitler clearly showed his temporary allies who was the boss in the Reich. Fritz Thyssen, the head of the United Steel Mills concern, one of the first to start financing Hitler's party and joined the NSDAP in 1931, in 1939, protesting against the outbreak of war, emigrated to Switzerland. In 1940, the German occupation authorities arrested Thyssen and his family in France. He was liberated from the concentration camp in 1945 by the allied troops. High military profits were an illusory thing, since their maintenance depended entirely on the victory of Germany in the war. Since the end of 1942, any sober-minded observer knew that Germany would lose the war. Many businessmen did not doubt such an outcome as early as 1939. They supported Hitler when he annexed Austria and the Sudetes, but they were very afraid of a real big war.

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us. For business, it meant, above all, a deadly risk with very dubious prospects for success. Another myth of Soviet propaganda is the assertion that German capital itself was the instigator of the Second World War, in full accordance with the Marxist-Leninist theory of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, the stage of wars and revolutions. German financiers and industrialists welcomed the revival of the German armed forces and the buildup of armaments, believing that thanks to this, the Reich would be able to take its rightful place among the great powers and secure its commercial and financial interests. But they knew better than anyone else that Germany was not ready for a protracted war and would not be ready in the foreseeable future, primarily economically, and defeat would automatically destroy all the nominally high profits of the military industry.

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The chief architect of the West German economic miracle, Ludwig Erhard, rightly stated in 1962: "Not least in the past fifty years so much trouble has befallen the world because peoples and statesmen have been unable to find a synthesis between freedom and responsibility, which is not clear enough. the will to freedom and to counteract any violence was manifested, which did not declare itself in any way, overcoming private and national interests, a sense of higher responsibility ... As a result of the global economic crisis and mass unemployment, the national-egoistic desire to withdraw into their own world with the rupture of all ties that bind the world community, in itself has led to someone that, against the backdrop of economic and social

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th crisis, through the fault of criminal elements, was that terrible hell, of which we were living witnesses ... "

German capital certainly bears its share of responsibility for Hitler's rise to power, but shares it with the whole of German society.

The German historian Joachim Fest rightly

wrote: "Hitler's extraordinary ability to correctly recognize the situation, the play of interests, look for weak points and seek out coalitions at the moment, i.e. his tactical instinct, further enhanced by his gift of persuasion, helped his ascent no less than his oratory, help from the Reichswehr, industry or the judiciary, or the terror of the Brown Guard. One-sided references to the role of elements of magic, conspiracy or brute force in the history of Hitler's ascension... demonstrate a lack of understanding of the essence of the events of that time... Hitler showed himself well in his own political field. By his deft tactics, by his initial slowness, by his manner of negotiating, now defiant, now quarrelsome, and by the impression of sincerity, ambition and energy which he was able to inspire in people, Hitler finally forced his opponents to support and finance his own ascent, for which besides, they had to pay the price..." And it must be admitted that Hitler brilliantly outplayed the captains of German industry and finance.

In the 1930s, Hitler confessed to the head of the Danzig Senate, Hermann Rauschning, one of his closest associates, who since 1934 had become a staunch opponent of National Socialism: other peoples. The German people are called upon to give the world a new class of masters.

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The bourgeoisie has played its role... But these "historically authorized" upper strata, this calendar nobility (information about noble families were entered in historical calendars - B.S.), these degenerate descendants of the ancient aristocratic families have left only one task is to "die beautifully"... New "upper layers" are created, and there is only one means for their creation: struggle. The selection of a new class of leaders is my struggle for power. Whoever recognizes me is called, if only because he recognizes me... The great revolutionary significance of our long, stubborn struggle for power lies in the fact that a new class of masters will be born in it, called upon to guide the destinies not only of the German people, but of all peace...

This is what the coming social order will look like. There will be a class of masters - historically formed, created from various elements through struggle. There will be many hierarchically organized party members. They become new

the middle class. And there will be a large mass of nameless, eternally dumb - a class of employees. And it doesn't matter who they will be - representatives of the bourgeoisie or the nobility, workers or artisans. Their economic position and their former social role will not matter in the slightest. All their ridiculous differences will merge in a single revolutionary process. But below them will be a layer of enslaved foreigners, in other words, a layer of modern slaves. And at the very top there will be a new high aristocracy, especially honored and especially responsible leaders. Only in this way, in the struggle for power and domination within and outside the people,

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Hitler repeated such theses not only in private conversations with his closest associates, but also in public. He never made much secret of the fact that the bourgeoisie would not go wild if the Nazis came to power. When Richard Breiting, editor-in-chief of the Leipziger Neueste Nachricht ten, visited him in May 1931, Hitler told him bluntly: "You are the representative of the bourgeoisie against whom we are fighting." And he added that he was not going to save the dying bourgeoisie, but, on the contrary, would deal with it even faster than with the Marxists, completely excluding capital from public life. Businessmen wanted to think that this was nothing more than propaganda rhetoric. But Hitler kept his word, if not in 1933, then in 1934, after the "night of long knives", completely eliminating the influence of big business on politics. Now he could rely on the unconditional support of the masses, and this was preserved until the very last days, when all of Germany lay in ruins, and the Allied troops stood on the Oder and the Elbe. As Hitler's adjutant Nikolaus von Below wrote in his memoirs, "the Fuhrer became the" idol "of the masses. He could demand everything, anything, and the people followed him... The contradiction between serious fears and joyful carelessness - this is what characterized the mood of the leading persons of the state, the Wehrmacht and the party in 1938. The broad masses of the people were happy and satisfied ... Trust in Adolf Hitler and faith in his desire for peace outweigh

remove all fears.

Propaganda and one-party system did their job. Not only the people, but also the bourgeoisie began to see in Hitler the hope for a better future for Germany, and later the only person who could prevent the defeat of the Reich in the world war.

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Hitler wanted to create a pyramid of a new social hierarchy, based not on social origin and current position in society, but on a socio-biological principle. At the top were to be those who possessed the strongest will and showed the greatest activity in the struggle for the triumph of National Socialism in Germany and the German race throughout the world. And the base of the pyramid should have been enslaved representatives of the lower races, primarily the Slavs. But it was possible to start building this pyramid only after the victory of Germany in the Second World War. Before this date, it was dangerous to touch the existing socio-economic structure.

When, after his release from prison, Hitler decided to turn to legal parliamentary activity, he was well aware that this required significant funds, which at the moment, while there are still relatively few members in the party, can only be provided by wealthy people - big bankers and industrialists. Throughout 1926, he repeatedly met with German entrepreneurs and assured them that the NSDAP did not encroach on the sacred right of private property. He argued that only his party was capable of providing the most effective defense against the "red danger". Entrepreneurs believed Hitler and began to replenish the party cash desk with hundreds of thousands of marks. Such reputable foreign companies as Royal Dutch Shell, General Motors, Ford also made contributions there... Not that they all liked the National Socialists very much. It's just that in business the principle was and still is: don't put all your eggs in one basket. Therefore, German industrialists (and not only German ones), financing

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a number of right-wing, nationalist and centrist parties did not want to ignore Hitler's party with its growing popularity among the masses. They saw sponsorship as a kind of guarantee in case the Nazis came to power. It was hoped that Hitler would thank his benefactors and at least not harm them. Hitler thanked. But in his own way, leading to the collapse of the Reich, and with it the national business.

In the appeal of the NSDAP dated March 1, 1932, the



it was said: "Hitler is the motto for all who believe in the revival of Germany ... Hitler will win, because the people want him to win." But no less important was the fact that German big business also wanted Hitler's victory at that moment, seeing in the Fuhrer the only guarantee of stabilizing the economic and political situation in the country, but by no means thinking that in some seven years he would unleash a new world war. .

In December 1932, on the initiative of the former chairman of the Reichsbank, Hjalmar Schacht, and the Cologne banker Kurt von Schroeder, a group of businessmen turned to Hindenburg with a request to put Hitler at the head of the government: will enjoy the support of the most powerful national force. Giving the leader of the most powerful national organization the post of head of the presidential cabinet, consisting of the best figures in terms of their professional training and personal merit ... will attract to the cooperation of millions of people who have hitherto stood aside ... "

When Hitler came to power, the government he formed was coalition. The NSDAP was supported by Hugenberg's party. But already in June

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In 1935, the headquarters of the latter was destroyed by stormtroopers, and the German National People's Party was forced to dissolve itself. Some of its members joined the NSDAP, while Hugenberg ceased to play any political role. As the size of the party grew, Hitler ceased to depend essentially on the financial support of big business. And with the acquisition of the main levers of power and the elimination of democratic procedures, the Nazis no longer needed the political support of bankers and industrialists.

When, on January 30, 1935, Adolf Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor, he declared, taking the oath: "I will give all my strength for the good of the German people. I will stand guard over the constitution and the rights of the German people, conscientiously fulfill my duties and act for the benefit of all, regardless of party affiliation.

Initially, besides Hitler, there were only two Nazis in the cabinet. Goering became head of the Prussian Ministry of the Interior and became an imperial

aviation commissioner. The leader of the parliamentary faction of the Nazis, Wilhelm Frick, headed the Reich Ministry of the Interior. This turned out to be enough for a complete seizure of power. After all, the Nazis controlled the main power structures of the country, with the exception of the Reichswehr, and had a powerful paramilitary organization - more than 400 thousand Ernst Röhm stormtroopers. Using the fire of the Reichstag as a provocation (it is still not known exactly whether it was organized by Goering, President of the Reichstag, or was the result of the actions of a mentally deranged loner - the Dutchman Marinus van der Lubbe, a member of the leftist communist

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group), the Nazis unleashed terror against the communists and social democrats, who were accused of arson. Subsequently, it was not possible to prove these accusations in court, but the deed was done. Already on February 3, 1933, speaking to the leadership of the Reichswehr, Hitler directly stated that inside the country it was necessary to completely put an end to pacifism, exterminate Marxism, "bend the one who does not allow himself to be bent", switch to "strictly authoritarian" leadership of the state, liquidate "cancer" of democracy and introduce the death penalty "for treason against the state and the people".

On March 1, 1933, the special law "On the Protection of the People and the Reich" suspended the operation of the articles of the constitution guaranteeing fundamental democratic rights and freedoms. Hitler, on the other hand, was endowed with extraordinary powers. A number of Reichstag deputies from left parties were arrested, including the communist leader Ernst Thälmann.

On March 5, 1933, elections to the Reichstag were held in an atmosphere of every kind of intimidation against the opponents of the Nazis. Speaking in Königsberg on the eve of the vote, Hitler addressed the German people with a pathetic appeal: "Now you must again hold your head high and proud! You are no longer enslaved and enslaved, German people, you again, with God's help, have free will."

The NSDAP received about 44% of the vote. The Communist Party was banned and did not participate in the elections, but almost 12% of voters voted for the list it supported. The Social Democrats received 18% of the vote. Hugenberg's party received about 8% of the votes, and with it the Nazis finally gained an absolute majority. The NSDAP had 288 mandates, the Center Party had 73, the SPD - 120, the Communists - 81, the Hugenberg party, which acted as a

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red fighting front (with the involvement of Papen's supporters who broke away from the Center Party) - 52 mandates. Soon Hugenberg's party was dissolved, and some of its members joined the NSDAP. And after the liquidation of Ernst Röhm in the summer of 1934 and the reduction from the ranks of storm troopers to the role of pre-conscription training of young people, no one else could limit Hitler's power.

The National Socialists proclaimed the primacy of the spiritual over the material. So, when on November 27, 1935, the organization "Strength through Joy" was created in Germany as part of the Labor Front, which was in charge of issues of recreation, tourism and physical culture, the head of the Labor Front, Robert Ley, considered its main task to "switch the attention of the masses from material values on moral ones" because "it is much more important to satisfy people's spiritual hunger than to fill their stomachs".

Nevertheless, Hitler did not intend to abandon private property in the economy, but sought to subordinate private capital to the interests of the state. Already shortly before the end, on June 26, 1944, speaking to industrialists in Berchtesgaden, Hitler solemnly declared: "The Creator not only creates, but also takes what he has created under his wing. This is the origin and essence of the phenomenon that we designate as "private capital", "private ownership" or "private property". Contrary to the assertions of the Communists, the process of human development will not end with the realization of their ideal of universal equality, i.e., with communism, but, on the contrary, precisely because some achieve something in life, while others do not, the former will inevitably take under guardianship of the latter.. The only possible prerequisite for the advancement of humanity on

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way to prosperity is the full encouragement of private initiative. And if this war ends with our victory, the era of private enterprise will flourish for the German economy. Do not believe that I am going to create any state economic management bodies. As soon as peace comes, I will immediately give free rein to the eminent figures of the German economy and will carefully listen to their

advice ... It is only thanks to you that I am generally able to solve the problems generated by the war. As a token of my infinite gratitude, I promise that I will never forget your merits and that there will not be a single German who will accuse me of not fulfilling my obligations. This means: if I promise you that after the war there will be an unprecedented period of prosperity for the German economy, then you should take my words very seriously. They will surely come true...

There is no doubt that if we lose the war, we will have to forget forever about the economy based on private property. After all, the extermination of the German people will naturally entail the complete collapse of the German economy. And not only because the enemy does not need competitors - this is too superficial an assessment of the situation. No, we are talking about our fundamental differences. It depends on the outcome of the war which of the two points of view will win: either we will be thrown back several thousand years and will actually return to a primitive state - after all, the state will then regulate all production activities - or humanity will continue to develop naturally. way through the encouragement of private initiative ... In case of defeat, gentlemen, there will be no need for you to deal with

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restructuring the economy in a peaceful way. For each of us will have to decide for himself the problem of going to another world: whether he will do it with his own hands, let himself be hanged, prefer to die of starvation, or agree to go to hard labor in Siberia - there is no need to think about anything else.

At that moment, after the successful landing of the Allies in Normandy and the beginning of the general Soviet offensive in Belarus, Hitler hardly seriously doubted that Germany had lost the war. So the tales of the coming prosperity of the German economy under the dominance of private property after the victory were only needed to encourage German business to hold out to the end, agreeing to the increasing state regulation, and not resort to sabotage actions, counting on the favor of the Western allies. . At the same time, Hitler tried to outline, for the sake of history, a certain economic ideal of National Socialism. In conditions when Germany will dominate the world, her economy should give advantages to the bearers of private initiative - those who can achieve something in life and stand out above the crowd.

More or less sharp contradictions between Hitler and German businessmen arose only in the very last months of the war, when the inevitable and imminent end was already clear to everyone. The Fuhrer wanted to destroy the entire German economy so that the enemy would not get the enterprises. The post-war fate of the German people, Hitler, who had lost the war and made a firm decision to die, was of little concern. But the German business was not going to die. Industrialists sought to preserve the economic infrastructure as much as possible.

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And Minister of Armaments Albert Speer found among them, as well as among the senior officers of the Wehrmacht, supporters of his sabotage of Hitler's order to carry out the tactics of "scorched earth" on German territory, which became a battlefield with the armies of the anti-Hitler coalition.

Events developed as follows. On March 19, 1945, Hitler issued an order code-named "Nero", which stated: "The struggle of our people for its existence compels us to use all means in the territory of the Reich that weaken the fighting strength of our enemy and impede his further advance. All possibilities are to be used, directly or indirectly, to cause long-term damage to its combat effectiveness ... All military installations, industrial enterprises, transport, public supply enterprises, as well as material assets that can be used by the enemy are to be destroyed on the territory of the Reich. Military facilities were to be destroyed by the army command, while civilian facilities were to be destroyed by gauleiters and imperial governors. But neither one nor the other, with rare exceptions, showed any zeal in its execution. The "scorched earth" tactics was openly sabotaged by the Minister of Armaments Albert Speer, who directly recommended the performers not to be zealous in executing the Nazi order. In fact, this order remained on paper.

On March 29, 1945, Speer sent the following memorandum to Hitler: "Yesterday, during our conversation, you made a distinction between a real awareness of the situation, as a result of which one can come to the conviction that the war can no longer be won, and the still existing belief that one can still end well. You asked me if I still hope for

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further successful conduct of the war, or whether my belief in this is shaken by sober statements in the special field in which I deal.

My faith in a favorable turn for our country remained unbroken until March 18th. This can be confirmed by all my employees and all politicians and soldiers favorably disposed towards me...

I am an artist, and therefore the task at hand seemed completely alien and difficult to me. I have done a lot for Germany. Without my work, the war would probably have been lost as early as 1942/43. I coped with this task not because of my special knowledge, but because of the qualities inherent in the artist ... I believe in the future of the German people. I believe in Providence, just and inexorable, which means I believe in God.

My heart was heavy when, during the victorious days of 1940, I saw how we, in the broadest circles of our leadership, had lost our inner self-restraint. This was the time when we had to stand the test in the face of Providence with decency and inner modesty. Then victory would be ours.

In those months, fate weighed us in its scales and found us too light. As a result of the passion for comfort and laziness, we lost a whole year of valuable time for increasing the production of armaments and designing new equipment, and because of this, in the decisive years 1944-1945, much was already too late for us. Any of the innovations a year earlier - and our fate would have been different! It was as if Providence itself wanted to warn us, but since then all military events have led us to unheard-of trouble. Never before, in no other war, did external conditions (say, the weather) play such a decisive and unfortunate role as in

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this most technicalized of all wars: frost near Moscow, fog near Stalingrad and blue skies over the winter offensive of 1944 in the West (in the Ardennes. - B.S.).

And yet, I am convinced that fate nevertheless delivered us from the very last consequence of all this.

and that one day it will still be possible to ensure the existence of our people. For this nation, which has shown historically unprecedented courage and heroism at the front and in the rear, cannot come to its bitter end. This inner faith, which allowed me, despite all the influences and awareness, to continue to be strong myself and instill faith in others, remained unshakable until the last few days.

When I delivered my letter to you on March 18, I was firmly convinced that the conclusions I had drawn from our situation regarding the preservation of our people's strength would certainly receive your approval. After all, you yourself once stated that the task of the state leadership in a lost war is not to save the people from a heroic end. However, in the evening you turned to me with words from which, if I understood you correctly, clearly and unequivocally followed: if the war is lost, let the people perish! This fate, you said, is inevitable. There is no need to reckon with the foundations that the people need for their most primitive future life. On the contrary, they say, it is better to destroy them yourself. After all, the race has shown itself to be weaker, and therefore the future belongs exclusively to the stronger people of the East. Those who survive after this struggle are still of little value, because all the valuable ones have died!

When I heard those words, I was shocked at first. When the next day I received your order to destroy

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(dated March 19. - B.S.), and soon an uncompromising evacuation order, I saw in them the first steps towards the implementation of your expressed intentions.

Until then, I believed with all my heart that the end of this war would be good for us. I hoped that not only our new types of weapons and military equipment, but above all our fanatical faith in our future would make the people and their leaders capable of the most extreme sacrifices. I myself then firmly decided to make a glider raid on Russian power plants and, by my personal example, help change fate (it seems that Speer, in the last weeks of the war, lost all sense of reality. - B.S.).

Noah can no longer believe in the success of our good cause, if at the same time we are systematically destroying the foundation of our people's life at this decisive moment. This is such an injustice towards our people that fate will no longer be able to favor us. We have no right to destroy what has been built by whole generations. If the enemy does this, thereby destroying the German

some people, it must take upon itself the historical responsibility for this. I am convinced that Providence will punish those who encroach on our brave and decent people.

I can work with a sense of inner decency, with conviction and faith in the future, only if you, my Fuehrer, remain committed to the preservation of our people's strength as before. Therefore, I do not go into the details of the fact that your demolition order of March 19, 1945, as a result of hasty measures, should deprive us of the last possibilities of industrial production and that its publication will cause the greatest confusion among the population. All these are things that although

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and are decisive, but bypass fundamental issues.

Therefore, I ask you not to take this step towards the destruction of the people yourself. If, however, you would decide in any way to give it up, I would regain the faith and courage to work on with the greatest energy. Understand what's going on in my soul! I cannot work to my full potential and enjoy the necessary confidence of my subordinates if, at the same time as I call on the workers to ensure high labor productivity, the destruction of our vital base is being prepared.

Our duty is to make every effort to strengthen the resistance of the enemy to the utmost. And I don't want to stand aside.

The military blows that Germany has received in recent weeks are devastating. Now it does not depend on us where fate will turn. Only a clearer vision can change our future. We will still be able to make our contribution to the eternal future of our people by firm behavior and unshakable faith.

God save Germany

Hitler did not respond directly to both of Speer's messages, in which the minister recommended not to destroy Germany's surviving industrial facilities and infrastructure. The Fuhrer was forced to come to terms with the fact that there were no hunters to carry out the order of "Nero". Perseverance in the execution of the order threatened to completely demoralize the army and the population. On April 7, Hitler signed a new order prepared by



Speer. It provided for the disabling of only communication systems and transport communications, and only at the moment when the German troops leave the given territory. Particularly

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it was stated that "when carrying out measures to destroy industrial facilities and evacuate the population, first of all, care should be taken that ... after the victorious end of hostilities, their consequences in no way hinder ... the restoration of production capacities." The Fuhrer resigned himself to the fact that even after his death the German people would exist under the conditions of the allied occupation, and agreed not to deprive them of their last means of subsistence. Nevertheless, in his political testament, he demanded that all Germans and German women "be loyal to the new government and the new president until death." Hitler hoped by his suicide to give the German people an example of fighting to the very end, to convince the Germans that death was preferable to capitulation. And he called in his will "to observe racial laws in the strictest way and to show ruthless resistance to the world poisoners of the world for all peoples - international Jewry." Ideally, the Fuhrer would like the entire German people to perish with him. But he was followed by only a few Nazi party leaders who feared responsibility for crimes, and some Wehrmacht generals who did not want to survive defeat. The majority of Germans, and above all the bourgeoisie, preferred to adapt to life in the new conditions and try to rebuild the country.

Was there a conspiracy by Ernst  
Röhm? Rem argued: "Only my stormtroopers will achieve pure,  
undistorted nationalism and socialism

saved." Such radical purism frightened

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both the military and the middle class, on whose support Hitler counted in the reconstruction of German military power, and then in the struggle for a new "living life"

wandering." Rem, on the other hand, wanted to increase the SA to 3.5-4 million people, create a state within a state, and then dictate his terms to Hitler. As early as June 1935, he liquidated the "private" concentration camps of stormtroopers and the auxiliary police units created by them. Rem was indignant: "He who demands to pacify the revolution betrays it. The workers, peasants and soldiers who marched under the banner of stormtroopers will complete their task without paying attention to the opportunists - the townsfolk and whiners. And he threatened: "Whether it suits you or not, we will continue our struggle. If you finally understand what we are talking about, come along with us! If you don't want to, we'll go without you! And if need be, against you!" Rem was also pressured by hundreds of thousands of unemployed storm troopers who could do nothing but organize street fights with political opponents. Remus demanded the establishment of a special jurisdiction of the SA, according to which the commanders could severely punish their subordinates for the crimes, but at the same time the same stormtrooper commanders could "convict for the murder of an SA fighter up to 12 people - members of an enemy organization involved in the preparation of the murder" . Röhm also hoped to infuse the SA into the Reichswehr and actually absorb it, as well as create a police force from stormtroopers. Then the main power structures of the country would be under his control. And about "friend Adolf", "friend Ernst", in an intimate friendly circle of adherents of same-sex love, spoke in a completely non-parliamentary way: "Adolf is a scoundrel. He betrays all of us. He only hangs out with reactionaries. Old comrades for him, you see

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whether, they became bad. He recruited generals from East Prussia. They are now his trusted people... Adolf knows exactly what I want. I told him about this more than once. No copy of the Kaiser's army is needed. Have we made a revolution or not? Something new is needed... A new discipline. New principle of organization. Generals are old routinists. They never have new ideas.

And Adolf remains shtafirka, "artist", hovers in the clouds. Thinking about leaving him alone. If it were his will, he would sit in the mountains and play the Almighty. And we stand idle, although our hands itch... Now we have a unique opportunity to accomplish something new, great, to turn the whole world upside down. And Hitler feeds me with promises. Wants everything to go its own way. He hopes that a miracle will happen later. This is the true "I" of Adolf. Wants to inherit

to create a ready-made army, so that "specialists" form it for him. When I hear this word, I want to tear and throw. And then, as he says, he will make the army on the basis of the National Socialist. But first he will give her under the command of the Prussian generals. Where will the revolutionary spirit come from then? Old goats remain in their places, who cannot win a new war. No matter how hard you all try, you won't rub my glasses. Here you are ruining the soul of our movement."

But Hitler understood that you cannot create a good army without specialists. And the Minister of the Reichswehr, General Werner von Blomberg, warmly sympathized with the Fuhrer. He ordered the officers of the Reichswehr to salute members of the NSDAP military formations and functionaries dressed in party uniforms. On February 25, 1934, Blomberg ordered that all military personnel wear an imperial eagle on their uniforms, holding a swastika in its claws. February 28, 1935 Blomberg straddled

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He tried to expel all Jews from the Reichswehr and forbade them to be recruited in the future. And from April 1, 1935, the military was also forbidden to marry women of non-Aryan origin. Hitler was not going to refuse the services of such professionals as Blomberg.

Meanwhile, Rehm began to deploy armed guards from the army headquarters and sent a memorandum to the Reichswehr Ministry, where the defense of the country was declared the prerogative of the SA, and the Reichswehr was assigned only the role of organizer of the military training of the population. Of course, the generals could not agree with this. And Hitler also realized that it was time to put an end to "friend Ernst". Already at the beginning of January 1934, he summoned the head of the Gestapo, Rudolf Diels, to him and instructed him to collect dirt on Rem and other leaders of the SA, as well as on the terrorist acts committed by the SA. At the same time, the Fuhrer emphasized: "This is the most important task of all that has ever been put before you."

On February 2, 1934, in a major keynote address to the Gauleiters in Berlin, Hitler bluntly declared: "Those who claim that the revolution is not over are fools. Unfortunately, there are people in our movement who understand that revolution is a constant chaos... The main thing is the selection of people who are able and who blindly obey government orders. The party is a kind of order. It must ensure the necessary stability for the entire German future..."

The first Fuhrer was chosen by fate; the second Fuhrer must from the very beginning have behind him a loyal, sworn association of like-minded people. One cannot be elected who relies on self-reliance

overwhelming force! 60

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There can always be only one Fuhrer... Such an organization, possessing internal rigidity and strength, will last forever, no one will be able to overthrow it. The unity within the movement must be as strong as ever. We have no right to fight among ourselves; Outsiders must not know that we have disagreements! The people will not be able to trust us blindly if we ourselves destroy this trust. Even the consequences of wrong decisions must be smoothed out by unconditional solidarity. Never should one authority be used against another...

Therefore, no unnecessary discussions! Problems about which there is as yet no clarity in the governing bodies should by no means be discussed publicly, otherwise they will be decided by the masses of the people. This was the madness of democracy, it nullifies the value of any leadership..."

On March 1, at a meeting with the leadership of the Reichswehr, SA and SS, the Fuhrer announced that the role of the stormtroopers was reduced mainly to the "political education of the nation", in relation to the army, the functions of the stormtroopers were reduced to the pre-conscription training of young people. At the same time, Hitler explicitly threatened to crush anyone who would interfere with the implementation of his plans. And he called on the attack aircraft and the military to reconcile with each other.

In public, Röhm was loyal to Hitler and even invited everyone present to a "breakfast of reconciliation." But among his like-minded people, he literally seethed with anger. Rehm (who himself had risen to the rank of captain) called the Fuhrer an "ignorant corporal" and urged not to comply with the agreement just reached with the Reichswehr on the delimitation of subjects of jurisdiction.

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Hitler, according to Röhm, is "a treacherous man

century, which, at least, should be sent on vacation. Rem did not know that a traitor had crept into his "inner circle". SA Obergruppenführer Victor Lutze, head of the assault troops in northern Germany and chief president of Hanover, hurried to Hitler and reported to him about the seditious statements of his boss. The issue with Rem had to be urgently resolved. And Hitler solved it in the most radical way.

Meanwhile, Rem organized marches and parades of stormtroopers, intensified their military training and bought weapons abroad. However, he did not have any clear program of action. After all, the idol of the stormtroopers was not only Rem, but primarily Hitler. There was no way to throw them into battle against the Führer. Rather, Remus hoped to convince Hitler to carry out a "second revolution", to push the former elites out of power, to transfer power to the "old fighters". And I wanted to demonstrate to the Führer that stormtroopers can be a powerful military force, in no way inferior to the cadres of the Reichswehr. Rem self-confidently declared that thirty divisions were under his command, not knowing that his fate had already been decided and none of the attack aircraft would intercede for him.

On June 4, 1934, Hitler met with Röhm and demanded that he abandon the idea of a "second revolution", but he did not receive a clear answer. Rem decided to go on vacation and also dismissed most of the attack aircraft for July, but warned the "enemies of the SA" not to have "deceptive hopes" that the SA would not return from vacation or would return significantly weakened. Rem warned that the stormtroopers would give: "the proper answer" to their ill-wishers.

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Already from the beginning of June, the SS and SD took the leadership of the SA under close supervision and began to prepare an operation to liquidate it. On June 21, Goebbels declared at the solstice celebration at the Berlin Stadium: "Only strength, self-confidence and strength impress this kind of people. They will see it!.. They cannot stop the pace of the century. We will get over them." Two days later, the counterintelligence department of the Reichswehr Ministry received an obviously false order from Röhm to the assault troops to take up arms. No one took this paper seriously, if only because among the recipients of the mailing were listed the worst enemies of Rem - the head of the SS Himmler and the chief of the SD Heydrich. In the meantime, the pressure campaign against Rem and the stormtroopers was in full swing. On June 25, speaking on the radio, Hitler's deputy for the party, Rudolf Hess, condemned "playing

revolution" for distrusting "the great strategist of the revolution, Adolf Hitler" and warned ominously: "Woe to those who violate the debt of allegiance." But he could not even imagine that this would happen in the fire of a world war.

On June 26, the head of the Prussian government, Göring, joined the chorus of threats. Speaking in Hamburg, he rejected the idea of restoring the monarchy, proclaiming: "We, the living, have Adolf Hitler." I'll strike! We worked like no one else has worked, because we have a people behind us who trusts us... Whoever sins against this trust will lose his head." On the same day, Himmler notified all the leaders of the SS and SD about the "upcoming SA mutiny led by Rem", which others might join.

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opposition groups. Both he and his subordinates knew that Rem was not going to arrange any coup, so he sent the bulk of the attack aircraft here to launch.

The Reichswehr also launched an offensive against Röhm. June 25 The Imperial Union of German officers from their own ranks. On June 29, Blomberg published an article in the *Völkischer Beobachter*. He declared that the army was entirely on the side of Hitler. The action against Rem was also supported by conservative nationalists, monarchists and the bourgeoisie. They all thought that after the liquidation of Rem, they could easily tame Hitler. But in his speech to the narrow party circle shortly after the "night of long knives", the Führer openly laughed at such hopes. According to the testimony of the former head of the Danzig Senate, Hermann Rauschning, Hitler declared: "I have embarked on the path of one hundred percent compliance with the rule of law, and no one will lead me astray. All the reproaches brought against me, all the difficulties facing us, I foresaw before all my obliging skeptics and took them into account. No development of events will take me by surprise. With unwavering confidence I will continue to pursue the great goal of our revolution. I don't need all sorts of critics out there who pass off their own laziness and licentiousness as legitimate shortcomings in our development. These are people who take pleasure in daily counting on my fingers our mistakes and difficulties, which are inevitable at the beginning of any great undertaking. Wouldn't it be better for these idiots, instead of counting all the bad things, to focus their attention on the positive aspects of our great work? By

at least it would have cheered me up. As if I don't know that the power is not yet in our hands! But

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my will decides everything! And whoever does not follow my orders will be destroyed. Not when his disobedience will already become obvious and well-known, but only when I suspect him of disobedience.

The denouement came on the evening of June 28, immediately after the wedding of Gauleiter Essen Josef Terboven, for whom Hitler was a witness. The Fuhrer telephoned Röhm and asked him to summon all the senior SA commanders on June 30 to meet with him and have a frank conversation. Hitler led the conversation in an emphatically conciliatory spirit and lulled Röhm's vigilance. And in order to have something to suppress, on June 29, Himmler's people distributed anonymous notes among the Munich stormtroopers with calls to take to the streets, and they began to march aimlessly around Munich until the awakened commanders returned their subordinates to the barracks. But a pretext for reprisal had already been found. In addition, the SD reported that the Berlin stormtroopers were going to capture the government quarter on the evening of June 30th. And then Hitler delivered a pre-rehearsed monologue: "Under such circumstances, I could make only one decision. Only a merciless and bloody action could still nip the spread of rebellion in the bud...>

Röhm at that time was serenely having fun with his comrades-in-arms in the resort of Bad Wiessee. And Hitler, Goebbels, the head of the press department of the NSDAP, Otto Dietrich, and Viktor Lutze, who changed the front in time, were in Munich at four in the morning on June 30th. In the building of the Bavarian Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Fuhrer attacked the police president of Munich, Obergruppenführer SA August Schneidhu Ber and the head of the personnel department at the headquarters of the SA Gruppenfuehrer Wilhelm Schmidt, declaring them to be the instigators of the Munich riot, tore off their shoulder straps and sent them to the Stadelheim prison. Right after

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After that, he went with his retinue to Bad Wiessee to take Rem and his associates still warm. Hitler's personal chauffeur Erich Kempka recalled:

with a whip in hand, Hitler entered Rem's bedroom, accompanied by two inspectors of the criminal police with cocked pistols. He barked, "Rem, you're under arrest! Rem looked out sleepily from the pillows of his bed and muttered: "Heil, my Fuhrer} "You're under arrest!" Hitler roared a second time, turned and left the room. According to A. Speer, the next day Hitler told his circle about the action: "We were unarmed, just imagine, we didn't even know if these pigs could put up armed guards against us>. And he was indignant at the homosexual predilections of Rem and his entourage: "In one of the rooms we caught two naked youths by surprise"

Rem had no armed guards. The rest of the leaders of the SA were also taken without resistance. Only Edmund Heines, an SA Gruppenfuehrer from Silesia, who was just caught in bed with his lover, began to fight with the police, but he was quickly overpowered. Some of the Gruppenfuehrers who were still on their way to Bad Wiessee were intercepted on the way and sent to the Stadelheim prison. Only about two hundred arrested SA leaders were taken there. At ten in the morning, Goebbels called Berlin and handed over the password to Hummingbird. After that, Goering, Himmler and Heiderich threw the Berlin SS Soviets into battle. The SA commanders mentioned in the lists were arrested and, unlike their Munich comrades-in-arms, they were taken out for consumption without an intermediate stage in the form of a prison, placing them against the wall of the Lichterfeld cadet corps. Meanwhile, Hitler in the Brown House issued a statement about the massacre from the

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moviks, speaking of himself in the third person: "The Fuhrer gave the order to mercilessly remove this plague ulcer. He will no longer tolerate the reputation of millions of private people to suffer and be compromised by individuals with morbid inclinations. Even Hitler spoke at that time about "great missteps" and "conspiracy", but he did not yet dare to use the word "PUTSCH", which was later used to characterize the events of June 30 in Nazi propaganda.

The leaders of the attack aircraft did not understand what had happened, why they were being killed. Many died saying, "Heil Hitler," but no one, tellingly, shouted, "Heil Rehm!" This once again proves that there was no "Rem's conspiracy", and even more so "Rem's putsch". Because for ordinary stormtroopers, and for Gruppenfuehrers, and for Rem himself, man No. 1 in the National Socialist



Hitler still remained in the movement. Rem, at best, wanted to be No. 2. And he was not going to fight against Hitler.

On the evening of June 30, Hitler flew to Berlin, having previously instructed the head of his bodyguard, Sepp Dietrich, to extort from the prison in Stadelheim the prisoners whose names were marked with a cross on the list given to him, and immediately liquidate them. But Rem was not among them. He was given another day of life. Perhaps Hitler was considering whether to arrange a short closed trial of Rem, but then he leaned towards the idea of extrajudicial reprisals.

For the company with the leaders of the SA, they killed the former imperial chancellor, General Kurt von Schleicher, with whom Rem tried to cooperate, and General von Bredow, head of the Reichswehr chancellery and Schleicher's closest friend, Gregor Strasser, secretary of the former Chancellor Papen

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E. Jung and his other closest collaborator, von Bose. Papen himself was saved from death by the intercession of Hindenburg, against whom Hitler did not consider it necessary to go. On the other hand, they killed the former head of the Bavarian government, Kahr, the former editor of Mein Struggle, Father Stempfle, who later quarreled with the Nazis, and the head of the Catholic Action association, Erich Klausner, and some other politicians and publicists of the right or centrist orientation were killed. In total, according to official figures, 77 people were killed during the "night of long knives" and in the following days, according to unofficial estimates - twice as many.

Rem's turn came on July 1st. In the evening, the commandant of the Dachau concentration camp, Theodor Eicke, and his adjutant Michael Lippert entered his cell. They put a pistol on the table and a fresh issue of the Völkischer Beobachter, which spoke about the suppression of the putsch. Rem was given ten minutes to think. But "friend Ernst" did not want to make a gift to "friend Adolf" in the form of his own suicide. Then Eicke and Lippert simply discharged their parabellums at Röhm. Before dying, Rem tore the shirt on his chest.

There is a legend that Hitler himself shot Rem with his own hands. This statement, as we have seen, has nothing to do with reality. It's not the Führer's business to shoot at the wrong comrades-in-arms. But it is very necessary for the mythologized social consciousness that the world villain

certainly not only gave written and oral orders for the destruction of millions of people, but also killed at least one person with his own hands, turned into a real, and not a verbal killer.

Sweeping over the traces of extrajudicial executions, Goering already on July 2 ordered to burn "all cases related to shares

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the last two days." Goebbels, on the other hand, forbade the publication in the newspapers of the deaths of those killed on June 30 and July 1. And on July 5, Hitler legalized the massacre of stormtroopers by approving a special law in the Reichstag, which reads as follows: for the necessary defense of the state.

As a politician, Hitler completely outplayed Rem, and the monarchists from the Hindenburg entourage. The leader of the stormtroopers did not have any original political program at all, nor any clear idea of what goals he was trying to achieve and what tools should be used to achieve them.

### Third Reich and Soviet Union

Comparison of the Soviet Union and the Third Reich has long been a commonplace in the works of Western historians, philosophers and publicists. In our country, such a thing was ventured only in the era of perestroika. There are two fairly common myths in this regard. The first is that the two totalitarian regimes were practically identical to each other, and the second that there was no essential similarity between them. This latter is now becoming more and more popular both in post-Soviet Russia and in Germany.

If we approach objectively the comparison of the USSR and Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, it will immediately catch the eye that the similarities between the two regimes are much greater than the differences. The main thing is that in both countries there were one-party, totalitarian political

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political systems that have made the "only true ideology" implemented through propaganda the main tool for subjugating the masses. There were similarities in many of the methods of propaganda and political manipulation that Hitler and Goebbels borrowed from their senior Soviet comrades and the German Communists, as well as from the Social Democrats. Hitler wrote about this in My Struggle: "If a doctrine more truthful, but carried out with the same force and bestial rudeness, is opposed to social democracy, this doctrine will win, although after a hard struggle ...

The very doctrine of Social Democracy became completely clear to me, as well as the technical means by which it carries it out.

I well understood the shameless ideological terror that this party uses against the bourgeoisie, unable to resist it either physically or morally. At this sign, a veritable cannonade of lies and slander begins against the opponent who at the moment seems to the Social-Democrats to be more dangerous, and this continues until the attacked party cannot stand the nerve and, in order to get a respite, it brings to the victim of this or that person most hated by the Social Democracy.

Fools! They won't get any respite anyway."

At the same time, the Soviet regime was much older than the Nazi one, and by the time of the direct clash between the USSR and Germany, it had developed to a much greater extent, embracing literally all spheres of society and completely destroying private property in the country. As for the fact that Soviet totalitarianism was much more total than German

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Captain Wilfried Strik-Strikfeldt, one of General Vlasov's associates, who came from the Baltic Germans and knew both Russia and Germany well, wrote well: . In the Third Reich, however, some foundations of the old state and social

venous structure; private initiative and private property have not yet been completely stifled; it was still possible to work and live without being dependent on the state. The Germans were still able to express their opinion, if it did not agree with the official dogma, or even, to a certain extent, act as they considered best. Although party pressure increased more and more tangibly ... but this form of lack of freedom in Germany was evaluated by the overwhelming majority of former Soviet citizens by the standards of the Stalinist regime of violence and therefore was perceived as freedom. And that was the big difference between us." Whereas since the beginning of the 1920s Germany had been a constant object of close attention of Moscow, which hoped to put the Communists in power there, in Germany until 1941 quite little was known about the USSR. Soviet closeness and suspicion towards foreigners had an effect. Hitler and other leaders of the Reich were forced to draw information from the rather meager reports of the German embassy in Moscow, Soviet newspapers and reports of Germans who visited the Soviet Union. So, in 1957, at the Berghof, Hitler asked his adjutant Belov to tell him about Russia, where he secretly studied at the aviation school in Lipetsk as part of a secret Soviet-German military cooperation. Belov recalled: "Since

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Eight years have passed since my stay there. Since then, a lot has probably happened in Russia too. But one thing seemed to me worthy of mention: we were surprised by the skill of the Russian mechanics who worked in the workshops and serviced our aircraft. When asked what I thought of this strange people, I outlined to Hitler two things which at that time made a great impression on me. In the vicinity of Lipetsk, there was only a partially fenced area for training bombing, where residents of the surrounding villages were almost not allowed. They tried to graze their cattle there. Once an unexploded bomb detonated, killing several children, as well as horses. The Russians presented an invoice for reimbursement of the cost of the horses, but no one said a word about the children. There are enough people! Horses were much more valuable. Then I told Hitler about the roads that had become muddy after the rain. In the summer, due to heavy rains, they became impassable for cars. In our then educational territory, where not all the streets were paved, all traffic stopped. Fortunately, in the summer the roads dried out quickly, but in the autumn, already in September, I myself was convinced that it was solid clay. Thus, Hitler got the idea that Russia is by no means Europe and one cannot count on good roads there. And the Fuhrer had to

understand that in the USSR human life is worthless and in the event of war, the Russians will calmly fill up the Germans with the corpses of their soldiers. Because the people, just like cattle, are also cattle, and meekly allow themselves to be sent to the slaughter. Such people, who value their own lives in nothing, were a formidable weapon in themselves, especially if there were tens of millions of them. The Wehrmacht might not have enough Sol

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dates, guns, tanks and planes, especially in a war on two fronts, to exterminate them all. And there was no doubt that Stalin would fight to the last soldier, which would not cause unrest among the bulk of the people, since the Russian peasants even accepted the death of their children quite calmly. But the Fuhrer still believed that Russia could be defeated in a single campaign.

In our minds, thanks to the propaganda of the war, and even the pre-war years, the idea was established that more than anything in the world Hitler hated the first country of socialism in the world, the socialist system and Comrade Stalin. Meanwhile, the Fuhrer's attitude towards Stalin and the Soviet Union was by no means unambiguous. He recognized certain achievements of the Soviet system and some of the outstanding qualities of the Soviet leader, moreover, at a time when the Germans at the front were still doing quite well. |

Hitler showed a certain sympathy for the Soviet state system, which he directly spoke about in his headquarters on April 11, 1942: "The idea of human solidarity was instilled in people with the help of force, and it can only be supported. Therefore, it is unfair to condemn Charlemagne because he built the entire state organization on the basis of coercion, proceeding from the interests of the German people understood in his own way. Likewise, Stalin in the past few years has applied to the Russian people measures similar to those used by Charlemagne, since he also took into account the very low cultural level of the Russians. He was aware of the imperative need to unite the Russian people within the framework of a rigid political organization (Hitler considered such an organization an ideal for the Germans as well).

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the manic people. - B.S.). If he had not done this, he would not have been able, perhaps, to guarantee the survival of the heterogeneous masses that made up the USSR, could not have extended to them such benefits of civilization, such as medical care, the value of which cannot be measured in money.

In order to maintain our dominance over the populations of the territories conquered in the East, we must, as far as we can, meet any demands for individual freedom, but deprive the inhabitants of the state organization and keep the population at the lowest possible cultural level.

In doing so, our guiding principle should be the following: these people have the only justification for their existence - to be used by us economically. We

should focus on extracting from these territories all that can be extracted from them.

The Führer at times greatly idealized the Stakhanovite system, apparently relying mainly on reports from Soviet newspapers. For example, on July 22, 1942, he stated in his Vinnitsa headquarters "Werwolf": "... The Soviet worker is taught by means of the Stakhanov system to work harder and longer than his comrades in Germany or in any other capitalist country ... It would be stupidity to treat the Stakhanovite system with disdain. The armament and equipment of the Russian armies is the best proof of its effectiveness in employing industrial labor power. Stalin also deserves our unconditional respect. In his own way, he's a damn good guy! He knows his models, Genghis Khan and others, very well, and the scale of his industrial planning is

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ascended only by our Four Year Plan. And there is no doubt that he is very strongly in favor of ensuring that there are no unemployed in the USSR, a common occurrence in capitalist states like the United States of America ... "And five days earlier, on July 17, the Führer praised the organization of medicine in the Soviet Union: "We could not have done anything smarter than adopting the Soviet system of universal nationalization. For example, in the USSR the medical class is state-owned... Patients wait 8-12 hours for an appointment with state doctors...

The standard of living of doctors, if compared with the cost of one suit, is miserable; after all, they were earning 550-700 rubles a month."

But along with admiration for individual Stalinist achievements, Hitler first and foremost regarded Stalin as one of his most serious opponents. On August 22, 1942, the Fuehrer bluntly stated his fear that "if you give him time, Stalin will turn Russia into a super-industrial monster who will completely contradict the interests of the masses, but whose existence will be justified by demagogic phraseology. In reality, this monster will be destined to raise the standard of living of only a narrow layer of his own associates. Its ultimate goal would be the absorption of the whole of Europe in the Bolshevik ring. He is a dwarf, but a dwarf standing on a big rock. He used the Jews to liquidate the intelligentsia of Ukraine, and then sent the Jews by rail to Siberia (in fact, in 1957-1938, many Jews from among the party workers and Chekists were simply shot during the "big purge"; sending several thousand Jewish volunteer colonists in Birobidzhan, for what, ve

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Perhaps, Hitler hinted, it was by no means a deportation, but a propaganda action to create an alternative to the "Jewish home" in Palestine, for which the Zionists fought. - B.S.). I think it is quite possible that he will run away to China if he sees no other way to escape." Hitler had no doubt that on the way to dominance in Europe he would have to face Russia.

Also, the former Minister of Armaments Albert Speer testifies that Hitler spoke sympathetically about Stalin: supremacy, to Stalin, because he knows better than anyone else how to treat the Russians. In general, he, perhaps, saw his colleague in Stalin.

While Hitler was cracking down on Poland and France, he made curtsies to Stalin. So, speaking on September 1, 1939 in the Reichstag, the Fuhrer stated: "I am especially happy that I can tell you one thing. You know that Russia and Germany have different state doctrines. This question is the only

ny, which needed to be clarified. Germany is not going to export its doctrine. Given the fact that Soviet Russia has no intention of exporting its doctrine to Germany, I no longer see any reason for confrontation between us. This opinion is shared by both sides. Any confrontation between our peoples would be beneficial to others. Therefore, we have decided to conclude a treaty that forever eliminates the possibility of any conflict between us. This obliges us to consult with each other in deciding certain European

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questions. There is an opportunity for economic cooperation, and, above all, there is confidence that both states will not waste their strength in fighting each other. Any attempt by the West to stop us will fail.

At the same time, I want to state that this political decision is of great importance for the future, this decision is final. Russia and Germany fought against each other in the First World War. The one who won't happen again. Moscow is just as pleased with this treaty as you are with it. Confirmation of this mu is the speech of the Russian Commissar for Foreign Affairs Mo LOTOV.

And in a speech in the Reichstag on October 6, 1939, on the occasion of the end of the war with Poland, the Fuhrer said: "Already in my Danzig speech on September 19, 1939, I declared that Russia was organized on principles that differ in many respects from ours. However, since it turned out that Stalin did not see in these Russian-Soviet principles any reason preventing him from maintaining friendly relations with states of a different worldview, National Socialist Germany, too, had no more incentive to apply a different scale here.

Soviet Russia is Soviet Russia, and National Socialist Germany is National Socialist Germany. But one thing is certain: from the moment both states began to mutually respect their different regimes and principles, there was no reason for any mutual hostile relations.

For all the similarities between the Soviet and National Socialist states, there was one fundamental difference. In the USSR, the emphasis was on



class, and in the Third Reich - on the racial principle

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division of society. In the multinational Soviet Union, only that dictatorship could be stable, which emphasized not the national-racial, but the class sign of the division of society. Hitler made "enemies of the people" and outcasts, first of all, Jews and other emigrants. The majority of those who supported the Social Democrats and Communists were either forced to leave Germany or were "reeducated" by propaganda and repressive organs. Therefore, the number of executed antifascists was in the tens of thousands, and not in the millions, as was the case in the USSR for those who were considered opponents of communism or opponents of the Stalinist line in the party, and mass terror began as early as 1918, long before Stalin came to power. In the Third Reich, terror was directed primarily outward. Inside the country, the number of executed antifascists numbered in the tens of thousands. At the same time, millions of Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians were exterminated. In the USSR, on the contrary, millions of people became victims of terror and famine during the Civil War, collectivization, and also during the Great Purge of 1957-1938. At the same time, the number of victims in other countries as a result of the actions of the Soviet punitive organs was comparatively small. In 1940, just over 20,000 Poles—military and civilian prisoners—were shot in Katyn and elsewhere. Repressions also took place in the territories of the countries forcibly incorporated into the USSR - in the Baltic states, in Western Ukraine, in Western Belarus, Bessarabia. But it was already, as it were, their own, native, and Stalin and other Soviet leaders no longer considered the inhabitants of these territories as

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foreigners. In addition, a number of German civilians were shot on charges of crimes committed during the Third Reich, as well as participation in the Werwolf, complicity with the Werewolves, or as hostages for actions committed against the Red Army. However, here the scale of repression was not the same as in

the Soviet Union itself. It is also worth noting that tens of thousands of Germans fell victim to crimes committed by the Red Army after its entry into Germany. Their exact number has not been counted and is unlikely to ever be counted. In addition, repression was practiced by the communist regimes in the satellite countries. In Eastern Europe, the victims of these repressions numbered in the thousands and were clearly incommensurable.

we are with the Nazi terror in the occupied countries. Apparently, the scope of post-revolutionary terror in communist China was more significant, but exact data are not available here. It is worth noting that in the last months of the war, the German command tried to force the troops to fight with the same harsh measures as the command of the Red Army. The situation was especially unfavorable on the Western Front, where German soldiers, knowing that England and the United States were observing the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War, surrendered much more readily than in the East. At the end of 1944, Field Marshal Keitel issued an order from the Central, where he demanded: "Immediately open fire from all types of weapons on every soldier who clearly goes over to the side of the enemy. If there is a suspicion that a soldier has defected to the enemy, it is necessary to immediately organize a trial on the spot. Consequence of Provo

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act immediately and in good faith. If, as a result of the investigation, the fact of transfer to the enemy is established, then the trial should end with a death sentence and the sentence should be approved. The family of defectors sentenced to death is responsible for the crimes of the convicted person with property, liberty or life. The measure of responsibility in each individual case is determined by the Reichsführer SS and the chief of the German police... In the absence of irrefutable facts of defection to the side of the enemy, the investigation must end with an appropriate act... The death sentence or punishment of the family in each individual case must be immediately informed part of the division or the formation corresponding to it. Also, the German detachments had to send the soldiers back to the battle by all means, without stopping before executions, but at the same time it was absolutely necessary to convene a preliminary military court. Here there was a fundamental difference with the Soviet practice of extrajudicial executions of fighters and commanders. For German soldiers and officers, only repressions consecrated by a court verdict could have authority. For the Red Army soldiers, accustomed to living in constant fear, the military-political leadership considered the most effective means of

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In the last months of the war, the Germans introduced accelerated courts-martial due to the development of mass desertion, but this could no longer influence the course and outcome of the war. On March 14, 1945, Joseph Goebbels wrote in his diary: "The Führer told me that now, under the leadership of General Huebner, flying courts-martial began to operate. The first was sentenced to death and two hours later the general was shot, guilty of not blowing up the Remagen bridge. At least some glimpse. Only by such measures can the Reich be saved. Colonel-General Fromm was also shot (participant in the conspiracy against Hitler, after the failure of the assassination attempt on the Fuhrer, he arrested and shot Stauffenberg and some other conspirators, which, however, did not save him from execution. - B.S.). I urge the Fuehrer to continue to act in the same spirit in order to finally force our senior officers to obey orders. One general who did not want to force one leading National Socialist officer to take decisive action (after July 20, 1944, such officers became a kind of commissars under the generals of the ground forces. - B.S.), will now also be brought to court by a military tribunal and probably sentenced to death."

Another significant difference between the two regimes was that the Stalinist regime was a product of the radical revolution of 1917, which took place under the slogans of the total destruction of the old world. Therefore, Stalin not only completely destroyed private property, but also completed the destruction of the old Russian army, carried out very thoroughly by Lenin and Trotsky back in the Civil War. It predetermined

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the power of the Red Army, devoid of experienced commanders. Many of the new nominees, who had at least experience of the Civil War, did not survive the purges of 1937-1938. On the eve of a big and, as Stalin hoped, a short and victorious war for the Soviet Union, he destroyed those military leaders whom he suspected of Bona Party intentions after the victory. The Hitler regime, on the contrary, was the product of a kind of conservative National Socialist revolution aimed at destroying the results of the anti-monarchist revolution of 1918 and the institutions of the Weimar Republic, at restoring firm power, the greatness of Germany, the aristocracy of the spirit. Therefore, Hitler did not touch not only private property, but also the armed forces, fortunately, he came to power without a civil war, and there was no split in the army. Hitler needed the army as a perfect instrument of aggression, and he did not carry out large-scale purges there until July 1944. But even after the assassination attempt on Stauffenberg, the scope of repression was not comparable to the Soviet one, and the vast majority of generals and field marshals saved not only their lives, but

and titles and posts.

The myth of "appeasement"

For decades, Soviet propaganda maintained the myth that England and France were making concessions to Hitler, allowing him to first remilitarize the Rhineland and violate the restrictions of the Versailles Peace Treaty on German armaments, and then to seize Austria and Su

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children's region of Czechoslovakia only to direct the aggressive aspirations of the Führer Rana Vostok and to deal with Soviet Bolshevism with his hands. True, one naive question immediately arises here. Maybe, of course ... Daladier and Chamberlin were not seven spans in the forehead, but there seems to be no reason to consider them complete idiots. Imagine for a moment what exactly was the idea of the British and French prime ministers - that Hitler attacked the Soviet Union. To do this, by the way, it would be necessary to cede Poland and the Baltic states to him - so that at least there was a springboard for

attacks on the USSR, otherwise it would turn out to be a war of an elephant and a whale - the warring opponents could not meet anywhere. But suddenly there is a hitch with Poland. After Hitler was not satisfied with the Sudetenland voluntarily ceded in Munich, having occupied all of Czechoslovakia, England and France gave guarantees to Poland, and then did not put pressure on Warsaw to concede on the issue of Danzig. Daladier and Chamberlain, this sweet couple, did not see their happiness. But imagine that the imaginary scenario would still be realized. Poland, and at the same time the Baltic states, would be given to Hitler to be torn to pieces, and then he would fall upon the Soviet Union with a benevolent one. the neutrality of England and France. And, naturally, if he would have crushed Stalin with the entire Red Army in just one campaign, as he had dreamed of. Well, then what? England and France would be left face to face with the enormously strengthened Reich, without allies, without any guarantees of subsequent support from the United States. Did Daladier and Chamberlain count on such an outcome? Hardly. But then, what other alignment could short-sighted politicians count on? Here, even theoretically, nothing worthwhile can be imagined.

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In fact, there was a certain reason in the actions of British and French diplomacy. The Entente countries, recovering with difficulty from the world economic crisis, were not inclined to exert military or economic pressure on Hitler to force him to comply with the articles of the Treaty of Versailles. Fearing a new war, they more or less calmly swallowed, within the framework of the policy of "appeasement", open acts of aggression - the Anschluss of Austria and the occupation of the Sudetenland, which England and France presented to Hitler on a silver platter as a result of the Munich Agreement. Western politicians were ready to turn a blind eye to the by no means civilized methods of dealing with the norms of international law, as long as it came to annexing territories with a sharply predominantly German population to the Reich. They believed that the assertions about the world mission of the German race, about achieving dominance in Europe, contained in "My Struggle", in the speeches of Hitler, Goering and other leaders of the Third Reich, were nothing more than propaganda rhetoric. Moreover, in his speeches after coming to power, the Führer spoke more than once about Germany's desire for peace. For example, on May 17, 1935, speaking in the Reichstag, he stated:

“For many centuries, European states and their borders were built on views that originate exclusively in state thinking. Thanks to the victorious march of the national idea and national principles throughout the last century, and due to the lack of consideration of these new ideas and ideals by states created on the basis of other premises, the seeds of numerous conflicts were sown. At the end of a big war before a really peaceful conference

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There can be no greater task than a new division and a new order of the European states, based on a clear understanding of this fact... No new war in Europe has been able to offer anything better than the present unsatisfactory situation. On the contrary, the use of force in any form in Europe, neither politically nor economically, could create a more favorable situation than the one that exists today. Even with the complete success of the new forceful solution, the end result would be a deepening of the already disturbed balance in Europe, which would thereby conceal in itself... the germ of new contradictions in the future...' It seemed to sound logical and convincing.

Daladier and Chamberlain expected that Hitler's appetite would be satisfied by Austria and the Sudetenland, uniting in the Reich the vast majority of Germans who had previously lived outside the Reich and almost all territories where the German population absolutely predominated over all other ethnic groups. That the vast majority of the inhabitants of Austria and the Sudetenland were in favor of joining the Reich was well enough known, and this circumstance largely predetermined British and French policy in this matter.

Meanwhile, in a narrow circle of insiders, the Führer left no doubt that the words about peace were intended only to disguise preparations for war in order to enable Germany to quickly create a powerful armed force before the creators of the Versailles system sensed danger. As early as February 3, 1935, Hitler warned his generals: “The most dangerous time is the time when we create a powerful army. Then it will become clear whether France has a real

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common statesmen. If she has, then she will not give us the necessary time for this, but will attack

us (probably together with their eastern henchmen). Britain and France allowed the Wehrmacht to go through this period of danger, which lasted until 1938, in peace. Then Hitler felt strong enough to risk the threat with FORCE.

Contrary to popular belief, the vast majority of Austrians welcomed the union of their country with Germany. And the plebiscite held on April 10, 1938, under German occupation, nevertheless reflected the aspirations of the majority of Austrians. Hitler's adjutant von Below testifies to this: "After a short analysis of the situation, the Fuhrer decided to immediately go further, to Linz. He did not have any political or military complications.

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At about 3 pm we left Kr. Inn in Braunau, on the border between Austria and Germany. A traffic jam arose on the bridge from military vehicles and residents of border settlements. Hitler's car drove with difficulty into Austrian territory and into the city where he was born. The glee was indescribable. The bells were ringing, the 120-kilometer trip from Braunau to Linz was like a triumph. We moved much slower than expected. All the highways were crammed with columns of incoming troops, and in the civil defense clans and villages we could hardly make our way among the jubilant crowds.

After dark, we finally arrived in Linz. People had already been waiting on the streets for hours for Hitler to appear. The Market Square was black with people. There was nothing to think about continuing the trip,

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the Fuhrer had to get out of the car and walk to the town hall. Seyss-In quarter was already waiting for him there. Together they went up to the balcony. I have witnessed a historic moment, and it made a deep and unforgettable impression on me. The bells were ringing, the endless cries of "Khaila" were heard. Seyss-Inquart managed with difficulty to achieve silence and utter the words of his greeting. In Hitler's brief address to the audience, one could feel his deep emotion.

\_ Accompanied by endless cries of "One people, one Reich, one Fuhrer", we drove to the Weininger Hotel. The turmoil in this hotel, until everyone finally sorted it out, was indescribable. The hotel kitchen could hardly withstand such an onslaught. call

over the phone was completely impossible. There was only a government connection for the head of the German state ...

On Monday, March 14, we left for Vienna. Exultation and delight again accompanied us on the almost 200-kilometer journey. Only in the afternoon we reached the former capital of Austria. In the suburbs, special attention has not yet been paid to our column. But the closer to the center, the more people stood close to the edge of the sidewalk, and on the facades of the houses one could see many flags with a swastika. When we reached the Ring, the jubilation took on forms close to ecstasy. Hitler stayed at the Imperial Hotel, which still had the K. ip K. - "Kaiser-royal" times (the times of Austria-Hungary. - B.S.). A huge crowd gathered in front of the hotel, continuously shouting: "We want to see our Fuhrer! By evening, he appeared several times on the balcony.

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On Tuesday, a large rally was organized at the "Heroes' Square" in front of the Vienna Hofburg. Hitler made a big speech from the balcony. He ended it with the famous phrase: "As the Fuhrer of the German nation and the Reich Chancellor, in the face of history, I declare the entry of my homeland into the German Reich. The Fuhrer in the afternoon received a parade of German troops that had already entered Vienna. The German soldiers were followed by the regimental army, greeted with special enthusiasm by the population. In conclusion, Hitler's SS life standard passed. At that time, Luftwaffe aircraft were flying in the sky in parade formation.

I note that not only these demonstrations, which could not be entirely inspired (too little time has passed since the beginning of the occupation), prove the mood of the Austrians. During World War II, all Austrian divisions fought just as well as the German divisions until the very last days. Only in April 1945, when everything had already been decided, did some of the Austrian officers in Vienna raise an uprising and help the Red Army capture the city. Moreover, in the SS, especially in the protection of concentration camps, there was an increased proportion of Austrians. And the Jews in Vienna and Austria were generally treated worse than in Germany proper. Shortly after the Anschluss in Vienna, local residents drove the Jews out into the streets and forced them to wash the pavement with soap and water. This did not happen in Berlin. No wonder Hitler learned anti-Semitic beliefs in Vienna at the beginning of the twentieth century, where they were especially



anti-Semitic speakers and pamphlets are popular.

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The Western powers were unable to react harshly to the Anschluss, not only because of the policy of "appeasement", short-sighted and stupid, but by no means directed against the USSR. Both the speed of the operation to occupy Austria and the absence of any active resistance to the Anschluss played a role, when no one dared to call on the Austrians to fight (and it is not clear whether such a call would have met with a response).

Also in the Sudetenland, practically the entire German population, which had sharply predominated in this Czech region since 1918, welcomed its accession to the Reich. Soldiers and officers of the Wehrmacht even jokingly called the operation to occupy the Sudetenland a "flower war", since the only threat to the German columns were bouquets of flowers, which were thrown by local residents. And in this case, England and France did not have a very wide choice. If the crisis had not been resolved so quickly, the outbreak of the Sudeten Germans, with the support of Hitler, could easily develop into a full-scale war. The Czechoslovak state in 1938 was by no means as monolithic as it is sometimes imagined today, which, by the way, is proved by its rapid disintegration at the end of the 20th century. No less a threat to its integrity than the irredentism of the Sudeten Germans was the desire of the Slovaks to create their own state. In the event of a conflict in the Sudetes, Czechoslovakia was threatened with disintegration, and it would be difficult for Prague's Western allies to count on serious assistance from her in a future war. And in the event of a civil war in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, England and France would have to fight Germany if they dared to come to the aid of the Czechs. But they did not want to fight in London and Paris. There was no certainty that the Soviet Union was really

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ez will fight with Germany. And in general, Daladier and Chamberlain really did not want to get involved with Stalin, who, obviously, if he had come out against Hitler, he would have demanded, at a minimum, to give Czechoslovakia his sphere of influence. It still means

the collapse of the Versailles system, the possibility of a direct confrontation between England and France with the USSR or, even worse, with the military coalition of the USSR and Germany, would have begun. Both the British and French premiers chose to make one last attempt to save the system by making concessions to Hitler in Munich and persuading the Czechoslovak government to accept an agreement to cede the Sudetenland to Germany.

It is possible that London and Paris would also have encouraged Poland to make concessions on the issue of Danzig and the "corridor" - the last territory with a predominantly German population remaining outside the Reich, if Hitler's demand had not been preceded by the German occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. Regarding this action, Hitler said more than once that only by acting quickly can one achieve his goals without war. Chamberlain and Daladier realized too late that the program for world domination stated in Mein Kampf was not a propaganda product for domestic consumption, but the real program of action for Hitler and his party. The example of Czechoslovakia showed that in no case would Hitler's appetite be limited to territories with a German population. Therefore, Poland was given guarantees of territorial integrity, which very soon involved England and France in the war with Germany. But the Western armies failed to provide any real help to Poland. In France, the mood was too widespread: "Let's not die for Dan

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tsig, and England at that moment did not have a large land army.

The leaders of Germany rejoiced that they had managed so well to spend Daladier with Chamberlain. On September 26, 1938, in a speech at the Berlin Sports Palace, Hitler stated that the demand for the annexation of the Sudetenland to Germany was "my last territorial demand." And already a month and a half later, on November 10, 1938, at a meeting with the chief editors of German newspapers and magazines, the Fuhrer admitted: "Circumstances forced me to talk for ten years practically only about the world. Only by constantly emphasizing Germany's striving for peace could I, step by step, fight for freedom for the German people and give them weapons that served as a necessary prerequisite for the next step. Of course, such peace propaganda also has its negative sides, since it can easily lead to the fact that in

The notion that the current regime ... is determined to preserve peace under any circumstances ... What I have said about peace for many years has been forced in nature will be entrenched in the minds of many people.

Goebbels, on April 5, 1940, proudly said: "Until now, we have managed to keep the enemy in the dark about the true plans of Germany, just as our internal political opponents until 1952 did not notice where we were moving and did not understand that the promise to act legally was just a ruse. We wanted to come to power by legal means, but we were not going to use power in accordance with the laws that existed at that moment ... In 1955, the French Prime Minister should have said (in his place I said

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would hall this): "The man who wrote the book "My Struggle" became the Reich Chancellor. We cannot tolerate such a person in our neighborhood. Either he will leave, or we will use the army." This would be perfectly logical. We were given time to get through this risky area, and we were able to get around all the dangerous reefs. And when we were ready and well armed, they started the war." Here the Minister of Propaganda, of course, shuddered, the Second World War was started by Hitler. Moreover, one policy of "appeasement" was not enough for this. It also required an agreement with Stalin on the division of Poland "in a brotherly way", and for the Soviet leader the Munich Agreement served as a propaganda justification for rapprochement with Hitler.

The devil's pact with satan

The main creation of Hitler and the Third Reich he created was World War II. Nikolausfon Belov testifies that Hitler "often said: Germany's situation will be the most difficult from 1943 to 1945, and therefore he needs to carry out his political plans before the indicated date. The Fuhrer first mentioned this on November 5, 1957." And in order to unleash the Second World War, it was necessary to make sure that, at least in the initial period, fighting on two fronts was avoided. Since Hitler had already subdued Czechoslovakia, one of the cornerstone countries of the Versailles system, the agreement with the Western powers, which provided diplomatic

support for Poland during the next crisis - with England and France - turned out to be impossible. If only because if it was possible with them, purely

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theoretically, to agree, then only on the basis of a joint action against the USSR. But England and France, having ever-increasing problems with their colonial empires, were not interested either in the conquest of the Soviet territories, or in the colossal expansion of Germany to the East, which Hitler spoke of in Mein Kampf. This would upset the European balance too dangerously. The African colonies, which were until 1918 the possession of Germany, and then transferred under British and French administration, were by no means considered by the Fuhrer as a tasty morsel, seeing in the proposals for their possible concession (however, never made at the government level) rather the intention to get rid of from burden. All the same, because of the climate, the African colonies could not become places of mass German immigration. And Hitler decided to negotiate with Stalin. Fortunately, there was ground for collusion: both dictators considered Polysya their sworn enemy. And then it was the turn of the temporary friend.

On March 16, 1923, immediately after the occupation of Czechoslovakia, during a railway trip through Moravia, Hitler told his adjutant von Below that "Poland's sworn enemy is not Germany, but Russia. And we, too, will one day be in great danger from her side. But why can't the day after tomorrow's enemy become tomorrow's friend? And Hitler continued his thought: this question should be thought over very thoroughly. The main task now is to find a new path for new negotiations with Poland. First, he wants to achieve the return of the Memel region, and then retire for a long time to the Obersalzberg. There he can calmly think.

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At a meeting with the leadership of the Wehrmacht. On May 25, 1939, Hitler outlined a program for further wars. He stated bluntly: "The national association of the Germans, with a few exceptions, has been carried out. Further progress without bloodshed cannot be achieved...

Poland will always stand on the side of our enemies. Despite the friendship agreement, there has always been an intention in Poland to use every opportunity against us.

Danzig is not the object from which everything is started. For us, it is about expanding living space in the East and providing food, as well as solving the problem of the Baltics. Food supply is possible only from where the population density is low. Along with an increase in the fertility of the soil, this provision will also be considerably enhanced by the German sound management. There are no other possibilities in Europe.

Colonies should not be taken for granted. This is not a solution to the food problem. It is easy to cut them off from the Reich by means of a blockade.

If fate pushes us into a collision with the West, it would be good to have more living space in the East. In times of war we can count on record harvests even less than in times of peace...'

At the same meeting, the Fuhrer stated: "Economic relations with Russia are possible only if political relations improve ... It is possible that Russia will show itself not interested in the defeat of Poland. If Russia continues to act against us, our relations with Japan may become closer."

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The situation that prevailed in Germany in the summer of the 29th is reported by Hitler's adjutant von Below: "Agriculture began to harvest and, like industry, needed every person to meet the deadlines for deliveries of finished products for increased orders. In this connection, it was not possible to avoid talking in the countryside about upcoming military events. It was not difficult to unravel the purpose of these measures after the previously undertaken actions. Hitler wants to return Danzig and the "Polish Corridor" to the property of the Reich! It only remained to find out when and how. Optimistic mood has so far reigned among the people. The war was considered excluded: "Adolf will be able to prevent it."

As former German Minister of Armaments Albert Speer recalled, in early August 1939, "as if talking to himself, Hitler suddenly said: "It is possible that great things will happen soon.

tiya! Even if I need to send Göring himself there for this ... If necessary, I will go myself. I stake everything on this card." Three weeks later, on August 21, 1939, we heard that our Foreign Minister would be negotiating in Moscow. During dinner, a note was handed to Hitler. He quickly scanned her eyes, his face turned purple. Turning his eyes into space for a moment, he slammed his hand on the table with such force that the glasses clinked. "Now I have them in my hands! Now they are mine!" exclaimed Hitler in a breaking voice... When the gray-haired man was finished, Hitler invited the guests to his place. "We conclude a non-aggression pact with Russia. Here read! This is a telegram from Stalin. In a telegram addressed to Reich Chancellor Hitler, an agreement was reached.

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On August 22, 1939, speaking to the highest ranks of the Wehrmacht, Hitler, not doubting that it would be possible to agree with Stalin, stated: "It was clear to me that sooner or later things should come to a clash with Poland. I made a decision back in the spring, but I thought that in a few years I would first come out against the West, and only then against the East. However, the sequence in time cannot be determined in advance. In addition, we must not close our eyes to a threatening situation. Initially, I wanted to establish acceptable relations with Poland, so that later I could start a fight against the West. However, this plan, which appealed to me, turned out to be unworkable, since the essential circumstances had changed. It became clear to me: in a clash with the West, Poland would attack us... at a moment unfavorable for us...

Our economic situation is such that we can only last a few more years. Göring can confirm this. We have no choice but to act. Our opponents risk a lot, but they can win a little...

The West has only two possibilities to fight against us: a blockade, but it will be ineffective because of our autarchy, and also because we have additional sources of raw materials and food in the East, and an attack by the Maginot Line, which I consider ineffective.

There would still be the possibility of violating the neutrality of Holland, Belgium and Switzerland. I have no doubt that all these countries, as well as Scandinavia, would defend their neutrality by all means.

properties. England and France will not violate the neutrality of these countries. So, in fact, England will not be able to help Poland. There is still an attack on Italy. Military intervention is out of the question. No one expects a long war. If sir

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Brauchitsch told me that it would take me four years to capture Poltssha, I would have answered him: this will not work! When someone says that England wants a long war, this is nonsense!

We will hold back the West until we capture Poland. We must be aware of our enormous production possibilities. They are much larger than in 1914-1918.

The enemy still hoped that after our conquest of Poland, Russia would act as our enemy. But the opponents did not take into account my ability to make non-standard decisions. Our opponents are small worms. I saw them in Munich...

England and France have undertaken an obligation, but neither one nor the other is able to fulfill it. There is no actual armament in England, only propaganda ... A significant strengthening of the British fleet before 1941 or 1942 cannot be expected when ...

In France, there is a shortage of people because of the falling birth rate. Little has been done in the field of armaments. Artillery is outdated. France does not want to get into this adventure ...

I was convinced that Russia would never agree to the British proposal. Russia is not interested in preserving Poland, and then Stalin knows that in the event of war his regime will come to an end, regardless of whether his soldiers emerge from the war victorious or defeated. The replacement of Litvinov was decisive. I carried out the turn towards Russia gradually. In connection with the trade agreement, we entered into a political conversation. Proposal for a non-aggression pact. Then a universal proposal was received from Russia (a pact plus secret protocols - B.S.). Four days ago I made a special

a step that led someone to the fact that yesterday Russia replied that she was ready to conclude a pact. A personal connection with Stalin was established. Von Ribbentrop will conclude a treaty after tomorrow. So, Poland is in the state in which I wanted to see it.

We have nothing to fear from the blockade. The East is supplying us with wheat, livestock, coal, lead, zinc... THERE IS ONLY ONE FEAR: lest at the last moment some swine slip me their plan of mediation... After I have made political preparations, the way for the soldiers open...

In the foreground is the destruction of Poland. The goal is the elimination of manpower, and not the achievement of a certain line. If war breaks out in the West, the destruction of Poland will remain in the foreground. Given the time of year - a quick solution.

I will give a propaganda reason for starting a war, it doesn't matter if it is reliable or not. The winner is not asked later whether he told the truth or not. At the beginning and during the course of the war, it is not the right that matters, but the victory.

Close your heart for pity. Cruelty. 80 million people should get their right. Their existence must be ensured. The one who is STRONGER is right.

As Hitler's adjutant von Belov testified, after the conclusion of the nonaggression pact, "Ribbentrop was greatly impressed by Stalin and the negotiations with him. According to his descriptions, Stalin was a bigger personality than the "swaggering" British politicians. Germany must look again for the junction of her policy where Bismarck found it when his policy towards England was stuck in a dead center. From Ribbentrop's reports about his talks in the Kremlin, it struck me that

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it showed a completely different side of his personality. He spoke about everything at ease, freshly, simply and naturally. And as soon as he started talking about the English, his face became cold and impenetrable. But Ribbentrop's position, in essence, meant nothing. Hitler decided everything. And he, according to the same Belov, "didn't share Ribbentrop's euphoria about the treaty of alliance with the Russians. This treaty served the Führer only as a tactical maneuver within the framework of his policy; he hoped that for Stalin too. If Hitler did not express this openly in those days, then his remarks could still be



clearly understand that his entire foreign policy will continue to serve only one goal - to defeat more vizms. On this point, both then and later, he opposed the views of Ribbentrop. At the same time, Hitler "gave the order for the attack, fully aware of the possibility of WAR with England."

As Speer recorded in his prison diary on December 21, 1946, "already before the start of the war at the end of August 1939, after the decision to attack Poland, Hitler said at night on the terrace in Ober Salzberg that Germany would fall into the abyss with him if the war will not be won.. He added that this time a lot of blood would be shed."

In this telegram, sent from Moscow on the evening of 23 August, Ribbentrop reported that the three-hour meeting with Stalin was going "positively in our spirit" and that the last obstacle to reaching an agreement was the Russian demand to recognize the ports of Vindava (Ventspils) and Libava ( Liepaja) area of their interests. Hitler immediately agreed to the required concession and no longer doubted that the treaty would be signed.

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On the night of August 25, 1939, in Moscow, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the USSR and Germany, Vyacheslav Molotov and Joachim von Ribbentrop, signed a non-aggression pact, which was later named after them. Such documents, in fact, are scary to sign in the light of day. After all, the pact and, first of all, the secret additional protocol attached to it opened the way to the Second World War. In a secret protocol, the USSR and Germany divided Eastern Europe into spheres of influence and practically spoke of the Polish state as no longer existing. Stalin understood that Hitler had already decided to attack Poland, and Iosif Vissarionovich was quite satisfied with this development of events. Before that, he had been negotiating with the British and French military delegations on the conclusion of a military convention against Germany, but he did not at all strive for their successful completion. Even before the start of negotiations, the Soviet delegation was instructed at the right moment to put forward a demand, obviously unacceptable for the British and French partners, to allow Soviet troops into the territory of Poland and Romania, and then, in case of refusal, to break off the negotiations, blaming the failure on the British. French side. Negotiations with Paris and London were necessary only to

The international public was under the impression that the treaty with Hitler was a forced step on Stalin's part, due to the position of the Western allies.

Later, Ribbentrop recalled that among the Soviet leaders he felt the same way as among the old party comrades. He sincerely hoped that Stalin could become a long-term German ally in the struggle against England. But Hitler to Stalin is not

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believed, as well as Stalin to Hitler. After the conclusion of the pact in a narrow circle, Joseph Vissarionovich said: "It seems that we managed to carry them out." And on August 28, 1939, Hitler, speaking at a conference with Reichstag deputies and party functionaries, stated: "The pact with the Soviet Union has been misunderstood by the party. This is a pact with Satan to cast out the devil." The devil meant the Poles, the British and the French, and in the long run, the partners in the pact were supposed to be in the same company. Stalin hoped that the Wehrmacht would get bogged down on the Maginot Line, and back in 1940 he hoped to stab him in the back. But Hitler deceived Stalin by dealing with France in 40 days. And since the Fuhrer had no doubt that without a victory over the USSR, domination in Europe was unattainable and that Stalin, if not in the 41st, then in the 42nd or 43rd, would attack him, he decided to strike first, as soon as it became clear that England could not be overwhelmed quickly. On June 22, 1941, he unwittingly forestalled the impending Soviet attack by just a few weeks.

On September 28, 1939, the Treaty of Friendship and Border between the USSR and Germany was signed in Moscow by the heads of the foreign ministries Molotov and Ribbentrop. The secret protocols provided for the transfer of part of Poland (Lublin region) to the German sphere of influence in exchange for the transfer of Lithuania to the Soviet sphere of influence. Ribbentrop recalled: "Since the Russians were very persistent on the issue of Lithuania, I called the Fuhrer. Then he called me back and announced that he was ready to cede Lithuania, adding: "I would like to establish the closest relations." When I reported this remark to Stalin, he succinctly said: "Hitler understands his gesheft."

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But the Soviets had not yet managed to seize all the booty ceded to them by Hitler, when in November 1939, that is, only three months after the signing of the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, Hitler said: "We have an agreement with Russia. However, treaties are respected only as long as they are beneficial."

As a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and the subsequent friendship and border treaty, the Red Army occupied, after the defeat of Poland, and then France, Western Ukraine, Western Belarus, the Baltic states, Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, a significant part of Karelia. These actions were no different from the German seizure of Austria, the Sudetenland, the Czech Republic or Denmark, but until now the Russian authorities refuse to acknowledge the obvious fact that these territories were occupied and then annexed by the Soviet Union. This is a yearning for the Soviet empire, an unwillingness to shatter the blue dream of our elite about the revival of the USSR, as well as an unwillingness to finally settle with the Soviet past. |

Today, practically all the territorial and political consequences of the unfortunate pact have been overcome. Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova gained independence. True, the territories seized by the USSR from Finland in 1940 remained part of Russia, but at least there is a formal justification for Moscow's tutelage — Finnish complicity in the German aggression against the USSR in 1941. But in terms of historical memory in modern Russia, unfortunately, voices are heard more and more often justifying the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Produced as a result of secret protocols to the non-aggression pact of August 25 and the Soviet-German treaty of friendship and the border of September 28, 1939, annexations

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are declared absolutely necessary to ensure the security interests of the USSR and historically just as the return of the territories lost by Russia in 1917, the peoples of which, moreover, supposedly slept and saw how to find themselves in the Soviet Union! As for the people's dreams, only one thing can be said: if everything was really so, the Soviet Union would not have collapsed so easily in 1991. As far as security was concerned, it was Hitler, not Stalin, who ultimately benefited from the pact, as the Germans attacked

The Soviet Union at its most favorable moment, taking the Red Army by surprise. And the fact that the Russian leadership has not yet bothered to apologize for the events of 1939-1940 only poisons Russia's relations with its neighbors. The actions of the Red Army are considered aggression and occupation by the governments of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and influential opposition forces in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. If we want to be trusted in our politics, we must clearly state that we unreservedly condemn the foreign policy of the Stalin era, that Russia apologizes for the violation of international law that took place in the past, and that such actions will never be repeated. But the Russian government, unfortunately, has its own pride and habit of looking down on former comrades in the USSR and the socialist camp.

In the short term, the August 25 pact gave Hitler the opportunity to crack down on his opponents in Western Europe and then launch a surprise attack on the Soviet Union. In the long term, Stalin's only and main gain was that this pact started World War II, in which, by the objective course of things, the Allies

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The most powerful powers of the world turned out to be the USSR, the United States and England and the British Empire, which took the brunt of the fight against the Wehrmacht in those areas where the Soviet armed forces were weak - at sea and in the air. After the Second World War, the USSR reached the maximum territorial expansion in its entire history. Its sphere of influence stretched from the Elbe to Vietnam, from Korea to the Balkans, but survived for only four decades. What is acquired in an unrighteous way, as a rule, is short-lived.

Race of the  
century: Stalin and Hitler - who is first?

Was Stalin going to attack Hitler? The fact that the leaders of the USSR, at the first opportunity, were ready to kindle a revolutionary fire in the limitrophe states and Germany, and then to occupy them with the help of the Red Army, is beyond doubt. For example, back in 1927, in the book "The Brain of the Army", the future Soviet Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov argued: "We are on the verge of future wars, and we have to go through more than one, maybe

be, the "convulsion" of imperialism, until only historians talk about it, as the system of social relations that once existed ... The contradictions that exist between the capitalist form of the world economy and the emerging new economic structure are so great that that one cannot do without great sacrifices and struggle ... And back in 1935, People's Commissar of Defense K.E. Voroshilov put forward the slogan: "Fight with little bloodshed and on foreign territory." Back in January 1930

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M.N. Tukhachevsky, who was then the commander of the troops of the Leningrad Military District, in his "Note on the Reconstruction of the Red Army" submitted to Voroshilov, stated: "This note focuses mainly on our Western neighbors and the big imperialists of Europe, who can stand behind them. Our industrial growth leaves far behind the level of our neighboring countries. The imperialists' aid to these countries can and will be very great. However, distances, communication routes, etc., create the possibility of breakdowns, interruptions in support, and therefore, in the future, we have the right to count on a significant superiority of our forces and means, in any case, in certain periods of the war. And what is characteristic, neither before nor after the war, there was no evidence that Stalin was afraid of Hitler and feared an attack from him in the prewar period. Even those of the post-war Soviet memoirists who defended the official version that it was precisely Stalin's fear of Hitler that led to the tragic unpreparedness of the Red Army to repulse the sudden attack of the Germans, could not cite anything other than the calls of Joseph Vissario Novich not to provoke the Germans. Meanwhile, strictly speaking, in the event that Stalin was preparing an attack on Germany, he would also have to be careful not to provoke Hitler to take preventive measures by too obvious preparations.

On the other hand, there is a lot of evidence that Hitler, too, seriously feared that Stalin would sooner or later attack Germany, if not in 1941, then in 1942 or 1943. Keitel, in his memoirs written in Nuremberg, stated: "After our preventive attack on the USSR, I was forced to

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to know that Hitler was right in assessing the upcoming Russian offensive. However, based on my impressions of being in the Soviet Union as a guest of the Red Army at military maneuvers in 1932, I assessed the Russian military potential differently than Hitler. He constantly proceeded from the fact that Russia is in the period of creating its own military industry and has by no means completed this task, and also from the fact that Stalin destroyed in 1957 the entire first echelon of top military leaders, and capable minds among those who came to their place Not yet. He was obsessed with the idea that a collision would happen one way or another, and it would be a mistake to wait for the enemy to prepare and attack us. The mere assessment of the Soviet military industry and its capacities (even without the Donbass) was Hitler's grave delusion; The Russian tank structure was so far ahead of ours that we have never been able to make up for this gap.

However, I must clearly state that, with the exception of the developments of the General Staff of the Ground Forces at the headquarters of the operational leadership of the Wehrmacht of the OKW, no preparations were made for the war in the East until December 1940, except for the improvement, in accordance with orders, of the railway network and the expansion of transshipment capabilities for the transfer troops to the eastern border on the former Polish territory.

Strictly speaking, what Keitel listed also represented preparatory measures for the invasion. However, measures of this kind could be preparation for both attack and defense. By themselves, they did not make an invasion inevitable.

The whole question is whether Stalin considered the period 1940-1941 suitable for an attack on. Ger

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mania? Judging by the available facts, yes. Here, for example, is what the then commander of the Soviet Baltic Fleet, V.F. Tributs: "People's Commissar of the Navy N.G. Kuznetsov in February 1940 issued a special directive in which he pointed out the possibility of a simultaneous attack against the USSR by a coalition led by Germany and including Italy and Hungary. In the book attached to the posthumously published book, N.G. Kuznetsov "Sharp turns" of the brief chronicle of the life and work of the admiral, the exact date of this directive is given -

February 26, 1940.

But in those days the Soviet-Finnish war was still going on, and England and France were seriously considering sending a large expeditionary force to help the Finns. After the conclusion of peace with Finland on March 12, almost all Soviet troops from the Finnish front were transferred to the western borders. The term for the demobilization of those called up from the reserve was postponed until July 1, 1940.

In terms of preparing an attack on Germany, it is worth considering that already on March 5, 1940, the Politburo decided to shoot the captured Polish officers. Until the end of February 1940, the captured Poles were going to pass through a special meeting, stamp sentences from 53 to 8 years in the camps and send the unfortunate to Kamchatka and other eastern regions of the USSR, where they were supposed to languish behind barbed wire until the end of the war. This decision can be explained by the fact that Stalin was going to attack Germany in the very near future, expecting a major German offensive in the West in the spring of 1940. Then the Poles would have to be released and handed over to the Polish government in exile in London, and oh

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how you didn't want to! Stalin did not want to release those whom he considered his enemies. After all, the overwhelming majority of Polish officers did not want their country to become a Soviet satellite. But Stalin could not imagine another Poland. At that moment, against 12 weakened German divisions in the East, Stalin could move at least 120 of his formations. Immediately after the end of the Finnish war, which ended on March 15, 1940 after the signing of the compromise Moscow Peace, an accelerated transfer of Soviet formations from the Finnish border to the demarcation line in Poland and to the borders of Romania began. In total, from April to August 1940, 37 divisions and 1 tank brigade were transferred to the West. Of these, 50 divisions arrived at a new location before June, the rest - in July and August. Most of the remaining tank and airborne brigades were disbanded to be reorganized into mechanized and airborne corps, which were also intended for operations in the West. In total, in the western border districts (Kiev, Odessa and Belorussian), taking into account 3 rifle divisions and 35 tank brigades stationed in the Baltic states, Stalin could put up 84 rifle and 15 cavalry and motorized cavalry against Hitler by the end of June 1940. divisions reinforced by 17 tank brigades. By the number of tanks - 200 or more -

each such brigade outnumbered the German tank division.

It is worth noting that in the same March 1940, Hitler first spoke with his generals about a possible campaign in Russia. On March 350, 1940, Hitler told the leaders of the Wehrmacht: "At present, England is placing her hopes in America and Russia.

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America will be able to ensure its maximum military power only in 3-4 years. Russia is the last enemy factor in Europe. It should be broken this or next year. Then we will be able to cope with our tasks both in the air and on the water during the next two years in material and personnel terms. Our task in Russia must be to crush the Red Army and liquidate the state. This is a struggle between two worldviews. Bolshevism amounts to an asocial crime and is a monstrous danger to the future. We must abandon the concept. soldier's partnership with him. A communist can never be our comrade in arms. It is a fight for destruction. If we don't treat it exactly like this, then, although we defeat the communist enemy, in a few years we will face him again. In the struggle against Russia, it is about the destruction of the Bolshevik commissars and the communist intelligentsia. The struggle must be waged against the poison of decay. The army must defend itself with the same means that are used to attack it. Commissars and GEP agents are criminals and must be treated as such. In the East, all cruelty is softness in the future.

Hitler mentioned in particular the large number of Russian tanks and planes. But, according to him, only a small number of them meet modern requirements. The vast Russian space and the vast distances make it necessary to concentrate the forces of the tanks and the Luftwaffe at decisive points. The use of the Luftwaffe after the first battles for air supremacy must be closely linked to ground operations. resist

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the Russians will not be able to massively use tanks and aircraft.”

The preparations for the war were disguised by quite loyal politicians. towards Germany by statements. So, on March 29, 1940, the head of the Soviet government and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov, speaking at a session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, said: “A sharp turn for the better in relations between the Soviet Union and Germany found its expression in a non-aggression pact .. These new, good Soviet-German relations were tested by experience in connection with the events in the former Poland and showed their strength sufficiently. , where German successes in the West were described and the general conclusion was made: “Now it is clear what responsibility the imperialists of England and France took upon themselves, rejecting Germany's peace proposals in due time and thereby unleashing a second imperialist war in Europe ...

Stalin, in his speech on the results of the Finnish war, delivered on April 17, 1940 at a meeting of the highest command staff, paid special attention to German aviation: “Our army has stood with both feet strong on the rails of a new, real Soviet modern army. This is the main plus of the experience that we learned in the fields of Finland, allowing our army to fire well, in order to take this experience into account. It is good that our army had the opportunity to gain this experience not from German aviation, but from Finland, with God's help.

It was the Luftwaffe that Iosif Vissarionovich feared most of all in the upcoming campaign to the West. Then the ground army of Germany at the Soviet borders

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was very weak. Here, by the beginning of June, there were only 12 German infantry divisions. Of these, 9 divisions were landwehr, formed from military personnel of older military age. These divisions had almost no vehicles, and their combat ability was very limited. With such an adversary, even the Red Army, which did not acquire lava in Finland, seemed to be able to cope. After all, it possessed at that moment an almost tenfold superiority in men and an absolute superiority in tanks. But German planes, Stalin feared, would be able to slow down the advance of the Red Army with continuous bombardments if the “Stalin's falcons” did not conquer

have air supremacy. Then Hitler will have time to transfer part of the forces from the French front and stop the Soviet offensive.

On the eve of the start of the German offensive in the West, the Soviet leader was in a good mood. He dreamed: when the Wehrmacht got bogged down on the Maginot Line, which was considered unapproachable, the Red Army would rush forward to the west on a wide front, crush the thin chain of German troops, occupy Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and rapidly break into the very heart of the Reich. And he will meet with grateful Anglo-French allies somewhere on the Elbe, and if you're lucky, then on the Rhine. Half of Europe will be under Soviet control. And there, you look, and before the world revolution, create mine with the bayonets of the Red Army, not far.

On the night of May 7, 1940, at a dacha near Moscow, Stalin in a narrow circle celebrated a meeting with a fellow countryman, eighty-year-old Date Gasitashvili, who was under the master of the shoemaker Vissarion Dzhugashvili. Dat loved to play with the owner's son, little Joseph, and Stalin kept his warmest wishes for the rest of his life.

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feelings. Stalin, Gasitashvili and Beria were at the party. There was also Alexander Yakovlevich Egnatashvili, deputy head of Stalin's bodyguards and the son of Prince Egnatashvili, who had Stalin's mother Ekaterina as a laundress. Also sitting at the table were Alexander Egnatashvili's son Georgy Egnatashvili, a junior security officer, Alexander Egnatashvili's second wife Lilia Germanovna, an ethnic German, and another security officer, Georgy's son-in-law Givi Ratishvili. It must be said that Stalin and Alexander Egnatashvili were brothers, which made them, according to Georgian custom, the closest people. Already in the 1990s, Georgy Alexandrovich Egnatashvili recalled that May meeting: "My stepmother was German, and somewhere in 1925-1926 she sent her daughter to her sister in Germany to study. Then in Berlin her daughter married a Jew, I don't remember his last name, but his name was Sigchen. And when Hitler came to power in 1933 and began to oust the Jews, this Sigchen captured his wife and fled to America through Denmark. So by 1940 my stepmother's daughter was already living in the States. Stalin looked at her several times and suddenly said to his father in Georgian: "Sasha, your wife is very sad, maybe she doesn't like that I came to visit you (the party was held at Egnatashvili's dacha. - B.S. )? And the father answers: "What are you, Soso! How could you think such a thing! The fact is that her daughter remained in the USA, and she is afraid that we will start a war with America ... "

Stalin somehow affectionately looked at her, stroked his mustache, took a glass in his right hand and said: "Dear Lilia Germanovna, don't worry, don't worry ... - and thought, we won't fight America." Then he shifted the glass to the other hand and froze like a sphinx. A minute passed, a second passed,

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the third ... And he strokes all his mustaches. We do not take our eyes off him, we are afraid to move. And then he raised his right hand, stroked his mustache and minted: "We will fight with Germany! England and America will be our allies! Don't worry, don't worry! To your health! › - and drank ... "

Georgy Aleksandrovich remembered the date so precisely - May 6, 1940, because it was on that day that his nephew, Guram Ratishvili, was born, and before the guests arrived, he and his son-in-law were just celebrating this significant event with a bottle of good Kartli

guilt.

Probably, Stalin hoped, while the Wehrmacht was not bogged down on the Maginot Line, to quickly occupy Poland and Germany, and then dictate his will to the saved France. As early as May 6, 1940, on the very eve of the great German offensive in the West, in a narrow circle of his guards and countrymen, Stalin made a very eloquent toast: "We will not fight America ... We will fight Germany! England and America will be our allies However, the rapid collapse of the French army thwarted plans for a Soviet invasion. Colonel General L.M. Sandalov recalled how the Soviet military leaders then lamented: "Who would have thought that it would take the Germans only a little more than two weeks to defeat the main forces of the French army?" Stalin himself did not expect the capitulation of France. Khrushchev testifies: Stalin, having learned that the French laid down their arms, swore obscenely and said, they say, now Hitler has untied his hands in the West. Obviously, Iosif Vissarionovich, literally until the last day, hoped that the French army would hold out for at least another month, which would allow him to complete preparations for the Soviet attack and force Germany to

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fight on two fronts. It didn't work out. Now the main forces of the Wehrmacht, who had the experience of brilliant victories in Poland and France and high morale, could immediately turn against the Red Army, in contrast to the Red Army, who knew the bitterness of defeat in the Finnish snows.

Let me remind you that on July 31, 1940, Hitler for the first time shared with the command of the German army specific plans for an attack on the USSR: "England's hope is Russia and America. If hopes for Russia collapse, America will also fall away from England... If Russia is defeated, England will lose her last hope. Then Germany will dominate Europe and the Balkans. According to this reasoning, Russia must be liquidated. Deadline - spring 1941. At that moment, the Fuhrer did not know anything specific about Stalin's plans for an attack on Germany, but he had no doubt that sooner or later Russia should be removed from the political map. peace. The further course of the development of the Barbarossa plan is well known, it does not cause much controversy among historians and publicists, and there is no need to present it here. I will only say that the Barbarossa plan was developed not at all as a defensive one and did not provide for any measures in case of a surprise attack by the Red Army.

The last attempt to negotiate was made in November 1940, when the head of the Soviet government, Vyacheslav Molotov, arrived in Berlin on an official visit. Shortly before this, on September 27, 1940, the Tripartite Pact on a military-political alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan was concluded in Berlin. Contrary to the myths created by Soviet propaganda after June 22, 1941, he was not directed against the USSR at that moment. In connection

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In connection with the conclusion of the Tripartite Pact, the Pravda newspaper wrote: "One of the important features of the pact is that it openly recognizes the spheres of influence of its participants and the division of these spheres between them with the obligation of mutual protection of these spheres of influence from attempts by other states. , primarily from England and the United States, which is in cooperation with it. Japan is granted the "Great East Asian Space" and Germany and Italy are granted "Europe"... The pact contains a reservation regarding the Soviet Union:

affects the political status currently existing between each of the parties to the agreement and the Soviet Union.

On November 15, 1940, in Berlin, in the building of the Imperial Chancellery, Hitler's last meeting with the head of the Soviet government, Molotov, took place. The Fuhrer declared: "In order for German-Russian cooperation to bring positive results in the future, the Soviet government must understand that Germany is involved in a struggle not for life, but for death, which must be brought to a successful end. Germany wants to secure the prerequisites for victory by any means necessary. If the USSR is in the same position, Germany will demonstrate the same understanding of Russian needs. Hitler demanded recognition of German hegemony in Europe. But Molotov, in turn, insisted on the concession to the Soviet Union as a sphere of influence of Finland, the Balkans and Turkey. The German response was Operation Barbarossa.

The Fuhrer declared to Vyacheslav Mikhailovich: "The more Germany and Russia, standing back to back, succeed in the struggle against the outside world, the greater

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there will be their successes in the future, and if our countries stand against each other, then the successes will be less." But Molotov insisted that the Soviet Union be allowed to conquer all of Finland, to take Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey into its sphere of influence, establishing control over the Black Sea straits. Shortly after Molotov's return to Moscow, with Stalin's approval, a telegram was sent to Ribbentrop stating that the USSR was ready to join the Tripartite Pact under the indicated conditions. But Hitler was not going to allow such strengthening of Stalin, and soon, on December 18, he signed a directive on the implementation of the Barbarossa plan.

In a radio address to the people on the occasion of the outbreak of war with the USSR on June 22, 1941, Hitler outlined the course of negotiations with Molotov as follows: "Contrary to our principles and economic interests, in response to an urgent request from the then Romanian government, which is fully responsible for such a development of events, I advised yield to the demands of Soviet Russia and, in the interests of peace, give up Bessarabia.

The Romanian government believed, however, that

can justify such an answer to his people only if Germany and Italy guarantee the integrity of what was still left of Rumania.

I did it with a heavy heart, mainly because when the German Empire gives guarantees, it means that it will keep them. We are not English, we are not Jews.

I still believed in this last hour that I had served the cause of peace in this region, even though I took on a serious personal responsibility. So that, in the end,

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to solve these problems and achieve clarity about the relationship of Russia to Germany, and also because of the ever-increasing mobilization on our eastern border, I invited Mr. Molotov to Berlin.

The Soviet Foreign Minister then demanded clarification from Germany on the following four points.

Molotov's first question: were the German guarantees to Rumania also directed against Soviet Russia, in the event that Soviet Russia attacked Rumania?

My answer: The German guarantee is universal and its fulfillment is unconditionally binding on us. Russia, however, has never told us that it has interests in Rumania other than Bessarabia. The capture of Northern Bukovina was already a violation of the agreement. Therefore, I did not think that Russia could suddenly have any far-reaching intentions towards Rumania.

Molotov's second question: Russia again feels threatened by Finland. Russia is not going to tolerate it. Is Germany ready not to give any help to Finland and, above all, to immediately withdraw the German auxiliaries advancing towards Kirkenes?

My answer: Germany still has no political interests in Finland. The German government, however, will not tolerate another Russian war against the small Finnish people, especially since we never thought that Finland was in a position to threaten Russia. Under no circumstances do we want to open a new theater of war in the Baltic.

Molotov's third question: Will Germany agree if Russia gives guarantees to Bulgaria and sends

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Soviet troops to Bulgaria in accordance with this, in connection with which he - Molotov - is ready to declare that the Soviets will not change anything, for example, remove the tsar.

My answer: Bulgaria is a sovereign country, and I have no information that Bulgaria ever asked Soviet Russia for guarantees, as Romania asked for guarantees from Germany. Moreover, I must discuss this matter with my allies.

Molotov's fourth question: In any case, Soviet Russia needs free passage through the Dardanelles, and its defense also requires the occupation of many important bases on the Dardanelles and on the Bosphorus. Does Germany agree with this or not?

My answer: Germany has always been ready to agree to a change in the status of the Montreux agreement in favor of the Black Sea countries. Germany is not ready to accept Russia's possession of bases in the Straits.

National Socialists! Then I took the only position that I could take, as a responsible leader of the German Empire, but also as a representative of European culture and civilization, feeling responsible.

It cannot be said that the Führer was a bit on the bow when speaking about his reaction to Molotov's proposals. He really did not intend to cede Finland, the Balkan Peninsula and the Black Sea Straits to Stalin. And therefore, after negotiations in Berlin, he considered it good to attack the Soviet Union back in 1941.

The decision to attack the Soviet Union was taken by Hitler after the Molotov visit. Keitel testifies: "I asked Hitler about the results of negotiations with Molotov - he called them unsatisfactory. However, the decision to prepare

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he still did not want to accept a war against the USSR, because he intended to wait for a reaction to these negotiations.

thieves from Moscow from Stalin ... However, it was clear to me: we headed for war with Russia, and I don't know if Hitler took all measures during the negotiations to prevent it. After all, this was possible only if he refused to defend German interests in Rumania, Bulgaria and the Baltic states. He was probably right this time too, for as soon as Stalin, in a year or two, would be ready to attack us, further demands from Russia would immediately follow for sure; after all, by 1940, he was strong enough to achieve his goals in Bulgaria, on the Dardanelles and in the Finnish question. Stalin wanted to buy time after the defeat of France in just six weeks had wrecked his schedule. I would not put forward such a hypothesis if our preventive attack in 1941 did not prove the level of Russian aggressive intentions.

On May 20, 1942, speaking with a radio address, Goering explained why the Fuhrer decided to attack Russia: "Throughout this time, the Fuhrer's efforts were aimed at achieving some sort of understanding with Russia, the Fuhrer wanted to save the German people from an unnecessary war. Russia seemed to be striving for the same. But we soon had to admit that Bolshevik Russia used this time solely to continue building up armaments in unprecedented areas.

quantities.

And if today they ask how the Soviet Union was able to produce so many weapons, the answer is one: not because of their love for the fatherland, for the people, for their leader. Everything is completely different there. Not out of noble feelings for the homeland, people, leader, they are so desperately

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they worked, but only because a person there means nothing, because all the workers there are slaves who need to be ruled; millions and millions, and if they die, new millions take their place, and only with the help of machine guns and whips can the workers in Soviet Russia be driven back to their jobs. No justification mattered or was taken into account, and the worker had no choice but to produce weapons: if they had not been produced, he would have been executed. The world has not seen such a slaughter of cattle, which took place throughout Russia.

Finally, we can now experience for ourselves this curious fact - how it became possible to produce so many weapons. This weapon is stained with the blood of millions of Russian workers -



men and women. Just as this Genghis Khan this winter again and again, without regard for military necessity, smashed his regiments against the German wall, in the same way, without regard to human lives, he produced weapons. Entire villages were destroyed overnight. The children were placed in institutions of one kind or another to be brought up in the Bolshevik spirit. Husbands and wives were separated, couples were separated - he went to the factory, she - from the factory, some of them never saw each other again.

Such were the Russian methods of working from under the whip. And this is different from our work. The origins of the industriousness of our German workers - men and women, peasants - men and women are fundamentally different, God knows, from the methods that were and are being used in the "paradise of workers and peasants." Regardless of foreign fabrications, each of you knows that we, needless to say, now ask a lot - and we will ask for even more - from the German worker, from men and women in the countryside, but still not

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when in Germany they did not force a German worker to go to work under machine guns, because the German worker is driven by his own feelings, by the dictates of his heart, to make weapons for the Führer and his army. He does not need to be forced, he does not need to be driven with a whip, as there.

When we found out how the Russians were building up and building up their armaments, how a thousand tanks turned into ten thousand, and ten thousand into twenty, thirty thousand, and the same with airplanes, since we learned that only on the recently captured Polish territory, they built almost a thousand airfields in a year - then the Führer had to make a decision. He clearly saw, he saw with his genius, that all this was being done solely in order to attack Germany at the right moment and destroy her. At first they slowly seeped in the north, against Finland. In the south they captured positions in Rumania. And they would press farther and farther, in the north and in the south, in the Balkans, in Scandinavia, in order then with the help of these pincers to crush Germany, which was involved in a difficult struggle against other forces.

Believe me, the Führer made many decisions, and some of them were terribly difficult. But this decision - when the threat to the German people was absolutely clear, and it was just as clear what a powerful force opposes us - would you turn a blind eye to this danger? He knew that sooner or later it would happen. And when it became finally, irrevocably clear that the months decide who will strike first, then the Führer struck first - with strong force and

with which only he can strike.

After unheard-of victories, the Russian armies were driven back, defeated, destroyed. We advanced into the depths of Russian territory by a thousand, one and a half

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thousands of kilometers or more. And when we were about to deliver a new powerful blow, another enemy rose up against us - not Russian divisions, not Russian weapons and not Russian leadership, the forces of nature rebelled against us. Quite unexpectedly, winter struck, bringing three days of terrible cold. And then came such a winter, which we have never experienced in the military history of Germany.

An unpleasant surprise for Hitler was the ability of the Soviet Union to restore and increase military production after the defeats of 1941, but on the whole the volume of military equipment at the disposal of the Red Army at the beginning of the war was correctly determined.

On December 18, 1940, Hitler signed Directive No. 21, which provided for the implementation of Operation Barbarossa, a plan of aggression against the USSR. The initial attack date was set for May 15, 1941. It was supposed "to defeat Soviet Russia in the course of a short campaign even before the war against England is over." The purpose of the operation was proclaimed to be the destruction of the bulk of the Russian army in western Russia and, as a result of pursuit, the achievement of the Arkhangelsk-Volga line, from which it would be possible to destroy the Ural industrial region with air strikes. It said: "I will give the order for an attack on Soviet Russia, if necessary, eight weeks before the scheduled start of the operation." Such a need, according to Hitler, arose on January 31, 1941, when a directive was given to concentrate troops on the conduct of Operation Barbarossa. However, due to the Balkan campaign, the attack date was postponed from May 15 to June 22, 1941.

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Jodl at the Nuremberg Trials claimed that Hitler feared a Soviet attack on Germany in the summer of 1941 or the winter of 1941/42. However, this is not confirmed by any documents. The summer date of 1941 is refuted by the fact that the Barbarossa plan did not provide for any measures in case of a large-scale Soviet attack. At the trial, Jodl claimed that he advised Hitler: "If there is no other means and if there really are no political means to avert this danger (from Russia. - B.S.), then I see only one possibility, namely an attack from preventive purpose..."

According to von Below, "On April 50, Hitler discussed with Jodl the details of the start of the attack under the Barbarossa plan, which the chief of staff of the Wehrmacht's operational leadership on May 1 handed over to the troops in the form of a letter. It was in this document that the day of the attack was indicated - June 22, 1941. This required the introduction of the most compacted schedule of all preparations from May 23. As regards the correlation of forces, Jodl pointed out that the main Russian forces were significantly reinforced in the southern sector of the front. In the central sector, however, the Russians have lately been moving troops along the line of the front, but at the same time a large German superiority in forces remains. On the basis of the assessment given by the commander-in-chief of the ground forces, Jodl reckoned with the possibility of sharp frontier fighting, which could take up to four weeks. The Russian soldier will fight where he is posted, to the last. Hitler personally took part in the drafting of the text of this letter to the troops. He has already come to terms with the fact that the day of the attack cannot be changed."

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On January 9, 1941, Hitler warned the leaders of the Wehrmacht: "A landing in England is possible only when complete air supremacy has been won and a certain paralysis has set in in England itself. Otherwise it's a crime."

Nikolaus von Below recalled: "The whole Reich was only talking about the approaching campaign against Russia. Soldiers concentrated in full combat readiness on the former Polish territory, a huge number of formations for the supply of troops and a concentration of communications equipment - all this made it easy to understand what kind of Hitler's goal. Too much of everything

was mobilized for this campaign so that it could be kept secret>. However, Stalin was convinced that Hitler was afraid of him, and if he was concentrating troops on the border, it was only in case of repulsing the alleged Soviet invasion.

On May 4, 1941, speaking in the Reichstag on the occasion of the successful completion of the Balkan campaign, Hitler almost let it slip: "The year 1941 is destined to go down in history as the year of our greatest triumph." By triumph, he meant not the Balkan campaign, but the forthcoming Operation Barbarossa, but Moscow did not attach any importance to this slip of the tongue, perhaps deciding that by "triumph" he meant the impending landing in England.

On June 14, 1941, after a meeting with the commanders of the army groups and air fleets deployed against Russia, Hitler, at a dinner in their honor, optimistically assessed the chances of success in the upcoming eastern campaign: "The Russian will fight stubbornly and put up stubborn resistance. We must reckon with the possibility of his large air raids, and therefore we should organize a smart air defense. Our Luftwaffe

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surety will quickly achieve success and this will facilitate the offensive of the ground forces. The heaviest battles will be left behind in about six weeks. But every soldier must know what he is fighting for. Not for the land that we want to seize, but against Bolshevism, which must be destroyed... If we lose this war, all of Europe will become Bolshevik. If the British do not understand and realize this, they will lose their leadership role, and thereby their world empire. Now it is even impossible to imagine how much they will end up in the hands of the Americans as a result of this war. But it is clear that the Americans see their huge profit in this war." Hitler spoke sarcastically about the British, who preferred an agreement with Russia to an agreement with Germany. This is how you can conduct politics in the 20th century, but by no means in the 20th century. With these words, Hitler pointed to his alliance with Stalin, which was a purely political step taken for the sake of Danzig and the "corridor" in order to return these areas to the Reich without war. According to Nikolaus von Below, Hitler was going to attack England in the summer of 1942, after the victory in Russia.

On the night of June 22, Hitler told his adjutant

von Below: "This will be the hardest battle for our GO SOLDIER in THIS WAR."

When on June 22, 1941, without declaring war, Germany attacked the Soviet Union, General Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces, wrote in his diary: at airfields, covered with tarpaulin, and before

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The first units, suddenly attacked by our troops, asked the command about what to do.

The suddenness of the German attack is primarily due to the fact that Stalin himself was going to attack Germany and, knowing full well how many tanks and planes the Red Army, including the latest designs, did not believe that Hitler would risk attacking him. After the defeat of France, Stalin decided to prepare more thoroughly for the campaign in Western Europe. In addition, he hoped that in 1941 Hitler would concentrate his efforts on preparing an invasion of the British Isles and that a strike from the east would be sudden for Germany. In January 1941, the Soviet General Staff held two operational-strategic games. Under the terms of these games, the "Western" (Germans) started the war. However, in fact, the games began from the moment when the "Eastern" (Soviet) had already pushed the enemy back from the border. Therefore, during the games, only the invasion of the "Eastern" into East Prussia in the north-western direction and South Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary in the south-western direction was practiced. As a result, it turned out that the East Prussian fortifications were difficult to overcome. Therefore, it was decided that the Red Army should strike the main blow in the southwestern direction.

In "Memoirs and Reflections" there is a wonderful conversation between Zhukov and Stalin, which took place in February 1941, even before the mass transfer of German troops to the East began: "I remember how once, in response to my report that the Germans had strengthened their air, undercover and ground reconnaissance, I.V. Stalin said:

"They are afraid of us. I'll tell you a secret, our ambassador had a serious conversation personally with Hitler, and he

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I told him confidentially: "Please don't worry when you receive information about the concentration of our troops in Poland. Our troops will undergo extensive retraining for especially important missions in the West."

As for the "retraining" or shelter of the German troops from British air raids (Zhukov told Simonov about such a version with reference to a letter allegedly received from Hitler by Stalin), Joseph Vissarionovich was difficult to deceive. He did not believe in these explanations. On the other hand, he had no doubt that the Red Army was stronger than the Wehrmacht, it had much more tanks, aircraft and artillery. Therefore, Stalin thought, Hitler should be afraid of him and take defensive measures on his eastern borders against a possible Soviet attack. Stalin himself, contrary to popular misconception, was not afraid of Hitler.

The Fuhrer and later continued the same game with the Secretary General. On May 5, 1941, the German Ambassador to the USSR V. von Schulenburg and the Soviet Ambassador to Germany V.G. met in Moscow. Dekanozov. Schulenburg had seen Hitler a week earlier and now introduced his Soviet colleague to the Fuhrer's views on the state of relations between Moscow and Berlin. Hitler, in particular, was unhappy that the USSR was trying to extend its influence to the Balkans and even concluded an agreement with Yugoslavia on the very eve of the German attack on that country. As Dekanozov wrote in his diary, "Schulenburg, in his conversation with Hitler, stated ... that the rumors about the upcoming military conflict

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of the Soviet Union with Germany, which, starting from January of this year, have been circulating so intensively in Berlin and in Germany in general, and about which the Germans passing through Moscow, of course, are

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they hire him, Schulenburg, to work in Moscow... In response to his statement, Hitler replied to him that, due to the above-mentioned actions of the Soviet government, he was forced to take precautionary measures on the eastern border of Germany. He, Hitler, had been taught by life experience to be very cautious, and the events of recent years had made him even more cautious. After the concentration of the Wehrmacht in the east gave rise to rumors of an imminent German-Soviet war, Hitler pretended that he finally decided to name the real reason for his actions. This is not a

retraining of troops for the subsequent operation against England, but the fear of Soviet intentions to achieve their goals by force or a show of force. It seems that not only Stalin, but also Timoshenko and Zhukov almost until June 22 believed in the defensive nature of the German measures near the Soviet borders and continued to prepare an offensive operation.

In March 1941 a new plan for the strategic deployment of the Red Army in the West was adopted. It took into account the results of the January games. If the previous plan, approved in September 1940, in addition to the main attack of the Soviet troops in the southwestern direction, also allowed, as a fallback option, the transfer of the main efforts against the East Prussian grouping, now the southwestern direction was finally chosen main blow. The March strategic deployment plan emphasized: "The deployment of the main forces of the Red Army in the west with the grouping of the main forces against East Prussia and in the Warsaw direction raises serious concerns that the struggle on this front may lead to protracted battles." Stalin needed a blitz

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krig. But the new strategic deployment plan, like the previous one, assumed the main forces of the enemy in the southwestern, and not in the western direction. It was assumed that from 30 to 40 infantry, from 3 to 5 tank and from 2 to 4 motorized divisions were stationed north of the lower reaches of the Western Bug River and to the Baltic Sea (on the front of the future Army Groups Center and North). Even on June 19, our intelligence included 29-50 infantry divisions, 4 motorized regiments, up to 3 tank divisions, a cavalry division and 2 cavalry brigades in Army Group Center. In reality, on June 22, this army group had no fewer formations: 29 infantry, 9 tank, 6 mechanized and 1 cavalry division and 1 mechanized brigade. The shock tank grouping of the Germans was never opened. Timoshenko and Zhukov were sure that the Wehrmacht would concentrate its main forces south of Brest. Here, up to 110 infantry, up to 14 tank and up to 10 motorized German divisions were supposed to appear, reinforced by 350 Romanian and 20 Hungarian infantry divisions and 2 Hungarian motorized brigades. In general, in terms of infantry, the forces of Germany and its allies were exaggerated one and a half times, in terms of tanks - three, and in terms of aircraft - FIVE and a HALF.

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The March plan for the strategic deployment of the Red Army in the west stated: "Germany will most likely deploy its main forces in the southeast from Sedlec to Hungary in order to seize Ukraine with a blow to Berdichev, Kiev." But in fact, Zhukov and Timoshenko and Stalin did not believe that Hitler would soon attack the USSR, although it was admitted in the same plan: "Documentary data on the operational plans of potential adversaries, both in the West and

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and in the east, the General Staff does not have. Words about aggressive German plans to seize Ukraine were needed only to disguise their own plans for an attack on Germany and the associated creation of a powerful strike group of Soviet forces in the southwest. But this idea remained a secret only from the commanders of the districts and armies. Stalin, Timoshenko, Zhukov, in all likelihood, and Budyonny, and also (for sure!) some generals of the General Staff knew how events would actually unfold, who should attack whom and when exactly. Because on the same strategic deployment plan, dated March 11, 1941, Lieutenant General N.F. Vatutin, in the section where tasks were set for the future South-Western Front, made a very eloquent note: "The offensive should begin on 12.6." This could mean only one thing: at that time, the attack on Germany was planned to begin on June 12, 1941, delivering the main blow in the southwestern direction, in full accordance with the course and results of the second January operational games.

Vatutin could set the date of June 12 only at the direction of his immediate superior, Zhukov, who, in turn, could not determine this date without the consent of People's Commissar Timoshenko. The latter could have received this date only from Stalin.

The June 12 deadline could not be met. The carrying capacity of the railways in the western part of the USSR was two to two and a half times lower than that of the railways in Germany and Poland, approaching the Soviet borders. In addition, many Soviet units had to be transferred because of the Urals. Therefore, the deployment of the Red Army against Germany, although it began earlier than the deployment of the Wehrmacht



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according to the Barbarossa plan, back in the spring of 1940, but it required more time.

Already in May, it became clear that by June 12 it would not be possible to concentrate all the troops intended for participation in the invasion and provide them with the necessary amount of fuel, ammunition and other supplies. By the middle of May, the last of the pre-war plans for the strategic deployment of the Soviet armed forces in the west was ready at the General Staff. Judging by the terms named in the directives issued on its basis, at that moment they were already oriented towards the start of the offensive of the Red Army not in June, but in July of the 41st. The document was entitled "Considerations on the plan for the strategic deployment of the forces of the Soviet Union in the event of a war with Germany and its allies." It was written by hand by Vatutin's deputy, Vasilevsky, and some additions were made by Nikolay Fedorovich himself. At the end of the text, the signatures of Timoshenko and Zhukov were indicated, but, as in the March plan, their signatures are not on the document.

The Considerations stated: "Considering that Germany is currently keeping her army from being mobilized, with a deployed rear, she has the opportunity to warn us in the deployment and deliver a surprise blow.

In order to prevent this, I consider it necessary in no case to give the German command the initiative to act, to forestall the enemy in deployment and to attack the German army at the moment when it will be in the deployment stage and will not have time to organize the front and the interaction of the combat arms. .

The first strategic goal of the actions of the Red Army troops was to defeat the main forces of the German army deployed south of the line

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Brest - Demblin, and exit by the 30th day of the operation to the Ostrolenka front, r. Narew, Lovich, Lodz, Kreutzburg, Oppeln, Olomouc. The next strategic goal is to have an offensive from the Katowice region in a northern or northwestern direction,

crush the large forces of the center and the northern wing of the German front and seize the territory of former Poland and East Prussia.

The immediate task is to defeat the German army east of the Vistula River and in the Krakow direction, reach the Narew and Vistula rivers and capture the Katowice region, for which: a) deliver the main blow by the forces of the Southwestern Front in the direction of Krakow, Katowice, cutting off Germany from her southern allies; 6) deliver an auxiliary strike by the left wing of the Western Front in the direction of Sedlec, Demblin, with the aim of pinning down the Warsaw grouping and capturing Warsaw, as well as assisting the Southwestern Front in defeating the enemy's Lublin grouping; c) to conduct an active defense against Finland, East Prussia, Hungary and Romania and be ready to strike against Romania if the situation is favorable. Thus, the Red Army will begin offensive operations from the Chizhev, Lutovisko front with the forces of 152 divisions against 100 German divisions.

However, in reality, the main German forces were concentrated in the center, and not in the south-west of the future Soviet-German front. The German Army Group South had only 38 divisions, of which 7 divisions were stationed in Rumania and not in Poland. Even if the Red Army managed to preempt the Wehrmacht and strike first, its blow would have fallen almost on an empty place. On the other hand, the Soviet strike force would certainly have been subjected to

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powerful flank attack from Army Group Center and would have been defeated.

Stalin had no clear idea of what a serious opponent he would have to face, and in all seriousness believed that Germany's victories in the west were primarily due to the weakness of its opponents. He believed that the Soviet tankers would not yield to the Wehrmacht tankers, and the "Stalin's falcons" would not yield to the aces of the Luftwaffe. According to the People's Commissar of the Navy N.G. Kuznetsova, "I.V. Stalin imagined the combat readiness of our Armed Forces to be higher than it actually was. Knowing exactly the number of the newest planes stationed on his orders at the border airfields, he believed that at any moment, on a combat alarm signal, they could take off into the air and give a reliable rebuff to the enemy. And he was simply stunned by the news that our planes did not have time to take off, but died

right at the airfields. Therefore, the Soviet leader was fearlessly preparing to throw himself into the abyss of war with the strongest army in Europe at that moment. Even in a nightmare he could not imagine that he would have to retreat to Moscow and Stalingrad. He sincerely believed that the Red Army, in terms of combat training, was at least as good as the Wehrmacht.

Strictly speaking, the Red Army was not ready for competent and effective warfare with such a strong enemy as the Wehrmacht, even at the very end of the war. On April 4, 1945, the newly appointed commander of the 4th Ukrainian Front A.I. Eremenko wrote in his diary: "We must hurry, and the troops are very poorly prepared for offensive operations, on the 4th Ukrainian Front they did not deal with this issue, which was decisive for the success of the case, in a timely manner."

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By the beginning of the implementation of the Barbarossa plan, Germany had no more than 2,000 combat aircraft and 3,680 tanks in the East, while the Hungarian and Romanian aviation together numbered only about 150 vehicles.

By June 22, 1941, the Soviet side had 12.8 thousand tanks in the West, including 1475 of the latest T-34 and KV, and 10,745 combat aircraft. Also, in terms of the number of personnel, the Red Army, even though it had not yet carried out full mobilization, surpassed its enemy in the West by 1.25 times. In addition to the 2.9 million personnel of the ground forces of the Red Army and the border troops stationed in the western districts, in April 1941, about 400 thousand more who had not previously been called up for military service were called up, and in May - June - also about 800 thousand spares. The German ground grouping directed against the USSR numbered about 3.5 million people, of which only about 2.5 million people were at the front in the first weeks after June 22, 1941. |

I am by no means exaggerating. The Red Army, which failed to properly organize the defense, had no chance of success in the offensive either. After all, an offensive is in many respects a more complex type of combat action than a defense. An offensive requires fighters and commanders to be able to respond quickly to a changing situation, show initiative, and make prompt independent decisions. Defence, after all, is a more passive type of combat operations, since the initiative is given to the enemy, and the actions of the defenders are largely determined by the location of the defensive lines. How could the Soviet pilots, who managed to

thief from 4 to 15.5 hours in the first three months of 1941, it is more successful to attack enemy airfields than

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did they defend theirs on June 22? With so little flying practice, especially on newer types of aircraft, the pilots were more concerned with keeping the aircraft in the air than with damaging the enemy. And these shortcomings could not be eliminated in a few months, which the Red Army allegedly did not have enough to meet the Wehrmacht fully armed. Due to the lack of both fuel and experience, until the summer of 1943, Soviet aviators preferred to barrage over the battlefield not at maximum, but at the most economical speeds. And in the last year and a half of the war, the Luftwaffe used the Eastern Front as a kind of training ground. Young unfired pilots were sent here to gain combat experience in relatively calm conditions before engaging in much more dangerous combat with Anglo-American aircraft in the skies over Germany.

The drivers of Soviet tanks would have looked even worse on the offensive than the voboron. They had the practice of driving from 5 to 10 hours, while for more or less confident driving armored. Noah machine needed a practice of 25 hours. This situation continued until 1945. It was by no means the surprise of the German attack, and not the superiority of German technology. The Soviet tanks "T-34" and "KV" outnumbered the main German tanks "T-Sh" and "T-ShM", and the new "tigers" and "panthers" appeared on the front in mass numbers only in the summer of 1943. As for artillery, Soviet field and anti-tank guns, in terms of their tactical and technical data, in particular in terms of firing range, surpassed the German ones.

analogues.

Likewise, Soviet fighters of old designs in terms of their tactical and technical characteristics

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second only to the German Me-109 fighter. But "Messerschmitov" at the beginning of the war in the East

front was only a little over 500 cars. Soviet aircraft of new designs were almost as good as them, and there were 1,540 such aircraft in the western border districts alone. If there were enough experienced pilots in the Soviet Air Force, if tactically competent principles for the combat use of aviation were well developed, if there was enough aviation gasoline, in the end, the Luftwaffe would never have won air supremacy, Goering's aces would never have defeated the "Stalin's falcons". But none of these conditions was met at the beginning of the war. Yes, and at the end of the war, when there was already enough gasoline, Soviet pilots were still inferior to the German ones in the level of flight training, and the Luftwaffe commanders more competently used the very modest forces they had left.

At a reception in the Kremlin in honor of graduates of military academies on May 5, 1941, Stalin confidently declared: "The Germans are mistaken that their army is invincible and its weapons are the best in the world. There have been no invincible armies in history... The war against Germany will inevitably develop into a victorious people's liberation war)." And in one of the toasts he openly admitted: "Germany wants to destroy our socialist state... Only a war with fascist Germany and victory in this war can save our Motherland. I propose to drink for the war, for the offensive in the war, for our victory in this war.

On June 4, 1941, the Politburo decided to form the 238th Polish Rifle Division of the Red Army by July 1 from Poles and Soviet citizens who knew the Polish language. Similarly, a month before the Soviet attack on Finland, as part of

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The Finnish People's Corps was formed in the Red Army. Correspondence between Beria and Stalin about the formation of a Polish division led by "politically correct" Polish officers ("those who did not think correctly" had just been eliminated in Katyn) and under the supervision of officials of the NKVD began as early as October 1940. Such a division, which, as the sad experience with the Finnish corps showed, would have had a very low combat capability, could be useful only in one case - if Stalin decided to fight Germany. For the victory parade in Warsaw liberated (or occupied - whatever you like) by the Red Army, it would be very useful - as a demonstration that the pro-Soviet Polish government also has its own army - as opposed to the "London Poles". Otherwise

a Polish military unit could only give the Red Army and the NKVD an extra headache. Starting with the development of new charters and sewing a new uniform, and ending with the need to allocate significant KGB forces for the "operational support" of the Polish division, the Poles, even "correctly thinking", were still not fully trusted. Most importantly, the creation of the Polish division violated both the letter and the spirit of the Soviet-German agreements on preventing the re-creation of the Polish state in any form. If any information had reached Hitler that a division of Polish military personnel was being formed in the USSR, the Fuhrer would certainly have regarded it as preparations for an offensive war against Germany and would have taken appropriate measures. Therefore, it was possible to form a Polish division only in deep secrecy and only immediately before the planned invasion of the Red Army into Germany and Poland.

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In order to cover the transfer of the last echelon of the Wehrmacht to the Soviet borders, which began after June 10, the German leadership carried out a cunningly clever combination. On June 13, 1941, the official *Völkische Beobachter* published an article by the Reich Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, "Crete – as in measures", with a direct hint that the experience of parachute landing in Crete will very soon come in handy for the Wehrmacht when landing on the British Isles. On the night of the 12th to the 13th, an issue of the newspaper was confiscated by military censorship, but in such a way that part of the circulation in Berlin had time to disperse and reach foreign embassies. On June 14, Goebbels noted with satisfaction in his diary that British and world newspapers and radio stations were coming to the conclusion that the German deployment against Russia was "a PURE bluff with which we hope to mask the preparations for the invasion of Great Britain." As a reaction to this incident, the Reich Minister of Propaganda considered the well-known statement of TASS, broadcast by radio late in the evening of June 15th. Goebbels noted with satisfaction: "The Russians, it seems, still do not suspect anything."

According to Marshal S.M. Budyonny, the Soviet leader viewed Goebbels' article as an attempt to divert attention from the true goal of the Germans - shifting the center of gravity of military efforts to the Mediterranean region, forcing the British command to concentrate efforts on protecting the colonies, much more vulnerable than the mother country. Hitler, in no way responding to the TASS statement, sought to create a

on the impression that he wants to convince the British of the reality of his intentions to conquer Russia, while in reality he will invade the British Isles in the very near future. Joseph Vissario

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Novich, in turn, regarded the Fuhrer's silence as a continuation of a somewhat different game: to try to convince the British that the Wehrmacht would soon invade the USSR, while in reality the German troops were preparing to attack British possessions in the Mediterranean, and then undertake a campaign in Iran, Iraq and India. It is possible that Stalin took seriously the rumors spread among the German soldiers who were being transferred to the Soviet borders that they were about to go on a joint campaign with the Russians in India. And he hoped that after the TASS announcement, Hitler would renew the proposal made to Molotov in Berlin in November 1940 on the joint division of the British Empire and on the assignment of Iranak to the Soviet sphere of interests.

After the Germans did not react to the statement, which stated that the rumors of an imminent German-Soviet war were groundless, Stalin had no doubts that such a war would soon begin. But I thought that it would be possible to start it with a sudden and powerful blow from the Red Army. And he continued to prepare for the "Thunderstorm" - he pulled troops to the borders, masked the airfields and military equipment located there, turned the headquarters of the border districts into the headquarters of the fronts, transferred stocks of fuel, equipment, and ammunition close to the western borders. If Stalin, Timoshenko and Zhukov had taken Hitler's silence in response to the statement of June 13 as a sign of an imminent German attack on the USSR, then they should have acted quite differently. They had to withdraw the divisions and aviation of the Red Army from the borders as quickly as possible in order to get them out of the first blow of the German artillery and the Luftwaffe. But the Wehrmacht's invasion took the Red Army by surprise.

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On June 20, 1941, the Main Military Council adopted as a basis the draft directive of the Main Directorate of Political Propaganda of the Red Army "On the tasks of political propaganda in the Red Army in the near future", which emphasized: "Every day and hour, an attack by the imperialists on the Soviet Union is possible,

which we must be ready to prevent with our offensive actions. The experience of military operations has shown that a defensive strategy against superior motorized forces did not give any success and ended in defeat. Consequently, against Germany it is necessary to apply the same offensive strategy, backed up by powerful equipment ... The German army has not yet encountered an equivalent enemy, equal to it both in the number of troops and in their technical equipment and combat training. Meanwhile, such a clash is not far off.

The timing of a number of Soviet preparatory measures indicated that in the 20th of June, Stalin expected to carry out an attack around the second decade of July 1941. In principle, there was a possibility that the German attack on the USSR would once again be delayed, and Stalin would have time to strike first. This would have happened if the anti-German coup in Yugoslavia had taken place a couple of weeks later - sometime in early April 1941, when the Wehrmacht would have already begun a campaign against Greece. Then, for the operation against Yugoslavia, a large-scale regrouping of troops would have to be carried out, and the conquest of the Balkans would also drag on for three or four weeks against the real time. Then Hitler would have to postpone the invasion of Russia until mid-July. Then Stalin would have had a chance, without knowing it, to forestall

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Hitler and strike first. But the result, I repeat, would be just as sad as in the implementation of "Barbarossa". The Soviet troops were not taught how to defend at all, but they also knew how to attack quite mediocrely, which was proved by the experience of the Finnish war. And here also the enemy grouping was incorrectly identified by Soviet intelligence, so that the Southwestern Front, which delivered the main blow, would inevitably come under a powerful and unexpected flank counterattack and be defeated. Not to mention the fact that the mechanized corps, which did not have radio stations, would immediately lose all control, and inexperienced driver-mechanics would drive most of the vehicles into a ditch. And many tanks would have broken even on the approach of the front line. Not to mention the pilots trained according to the "takeoff - landing" system. According to the order of the People's Commissar of Defense of December 22, 1940, "Pilots, navigators and aircraft technicians, INDEPENDENTLY NOTHING THEM MILITARY RANKS, who are in the ranks of the Red Army for less than 4 years, counting the service life from the date of conscription or admission -



leniya in the military aviation and aviation technical school, transfer to the position of URGENT SERVICE. By February 01, 1941, transfer to the barracks position all conscripts transferred to the position ... Families of the flight and technical personnel transferred to the barracks position, by February 01, 1941, WITHDRAWAL FROM THE TERRITORY OF MILITARY CITIES ... cadets of military aviation schools ... issue military pilots with the rank of "sergeant".

Tens of thousands of such precocious pilots were immediately produced to provide crews for the rapidly growing fleet of aircraft. They would have been shot down in a matter of minutes by German pilots who had

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The flight hours are ten times more. So for the Red Army, a catastrophe in 1941 would still have been inevitable, regardless of who would have attacked first. The difference would be only in details and dates.

In fact, the optimal course of action for the Red Army, which is weaker in comparison with the Wehrmacht in terms of command, control and combat training, would be defense, not offensive. Back in the 1920s, L. D. Trotsky perspicaciously warned that in the initial period of the war the Red Army would have to defend rather than attack, and even retreat deep into the country in order to gain time to mobilize all forces and means. Only later, "having behind us space and numbers, do we calmly and confidently outline the line where the mobilization provided by our elastic defense will prepare a sufficient fist for our transition to the offensive." However, after the dismissal of Lev Davidovich from all posts and his expulsion from the USSR, defense began to be regarded as a purely secondary type of military operations.

On August 1, 1941, Hitler stated at the Wolfschanz (headquarters near Rastenburg in East Prussia): "I am constantly being asked to say a word of praise to the bureaucracy. But I can't do it.

Of course, in our apparatus there are clean, incorruptible officials, accurate and very pedantic. But: the apparatus is too overorganized and the staff is in some places excessively swollen. And one more thing: no one is interested in the final result, no one wants to get a certain area of work under his supervision, to be responsible only for it, everyone depends on each other ... They

forever clinging to their chairs. With the exception of one type of troops, the ground troops, we have more independence in the Wehrmacht and less bureaucracy than in civilian

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these institutions! And that's with meager salaries. military.

And this idfix: legislation can only be uniform for the entire territory of the Reich. And why not develop a draft decree for only part of the Reich? But for them, the bureaucrats, the unity of the Reich is carried out according to the principle: better is a bad law, but for the whole territory, than a good one, but not for the whole territory of the country. The main thing is that the leadership should be aware of the activities of the apparatus and keep all the threads in their hands.

In the Wehrmacht, the highest award is given to those who, contrary to orders, by their own understanding, saved the situation with their decisive actions. In the civil apparatus, any violation of regulations can cost the head of everyone without exception. Therefore, officials do not have the courage to take full responsibility.

The only good news is that an entire continent gradually came under our rule (during this war). And already because of the different position of the sun over its different parts, no "uniformity" is possible. We are forced to manage districts ranging in size from 500 to 500 kilometers, with only a small handful of people at our disposal. Naturally, the police are compelled to freely use their weapons there. Party people will do everything right.

You have to pay for science: abuses are inevitable. Well, so be it, if only after 10 years they tell me: "Danzig, Alsace, Lorraine are Germanized, but at the same time 3 and 4 cases of abuse were revealed in Colmar, atam and there 5 and 10 cases of abuse." We are ready to put up with this, if only not to lose the provinces. In 10 years, we will have at our disposal selected human material, which we will know about: for this purpose we will take one, for another

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the goy is different if certain new tasks require experienced craftsmen. A new breed of people will be bred, true masters by nature..>

November 23, 1939, speaking to the leadership of the Wehrmacht, the Fuhrer stated: "Now the front in the East

ke is held by only a few divisions ... Russia is not dangerous at the moment. It has been weakened by many internal circumstances. Besides, we have an agreement with Russia. Treaties are respected for as long as it is expedient... Now Russia has far-reaching goals, primarily to strengthen its position in the Baltic Sea (a week later, the Red Army invaded Finland. - B.S.). We will be able to oppose Russia only when our hands are free in the Baltic. Further, Russia wants to increase its influence in the Balkans and directs its aspirations to the Persian Gulf, and this is also in the interests of our policy. At the moment, internationalism has receded into the background for her. If Russia refuses it, it will go over to pan-Slavism. Looking into the future is difficult. But the fact is that at the present time the combat effectiveness of the Russian armed forces is negligible. For the next year or two, the current state will continue ... Time works for our adversary. Now there is such a balance of forces that cannot improve for us, but can only worsen. Already at that moment the Soviet Union was considered by Hitler as a dangerous potential adversary of Germany.

On January 9, 1941, Hitler warned the leaders of the Wehrmacht: "Stalin, the ruler of Russia, is a smart head, he will not openly oppose Germany, but we must rely on the fact that in difficult times for

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In German situations, it will create difficulties for us to an increasing extent. He wants to take over the legacy of an impoverished Europe, he also needs success, he is inspired by the onslaught on the West. It is also quite clear to him that after our victory the position of Russia will become very difficult.

The British support the possibility of Russian entry into the war. If this last continental hope had been destroyed, they would have stopped fighting... If the British held out, if they managed to form 40 or 50 divisions and were helped by the USA and Russia, a very difficult situation would arise for Germany. This shouldn't happen. Until now, I have acted on the principle that in order to take the next step, one must defeat the most important enemy positions. That is why it is necessary to smash Russia. Then either the British will surrender or Germany will continue the war against the British Empire under the most favorable conditions. The defeat of Russia would allow the Japanese to deploy all their forces against the United States,

and that would keep the US out of the war.”

And on the eve of suicide, when there was no reason to lie either to himself or to others, the Fuhrer, according to the memoirs of the head of the Hitler Youth Arthur Axmann, explained the motives for the attack on Russia this way: “Suddenly Hitler came out of his room. He was in a gray tunic, on the lapel of which there was a gold party badge and an Iron Cross of the 1st class, in black loose-fitting trousers, in soft night shoes ... He walked slowly, dragging his leg and as if not looking at ANYONE ...

Hitler motioned me to sit down and sat down himself. At first we were silent. There were a lot of questions swarming in my head, but I could not get myself together and start a conversation.

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We talked about the war with Russia, and Hitler argued that none of the decisions he made during the war was more serious than the decision to attack Russia, although he painfully pondered the experience of Napoleon.

We had no choice, Hitler explained to me, we had to throw Russia out of the European balance of power. Its very existence was a threat to us. In addition, we were afraid that Stalin would take the initiative earlier, and in conditions that were catastrophic for us. We failed to assess the strength of the Russians and still measured them in the old way.

We were alone in the room, no one passed during the conversation. All that could be heard was the muffled hum of the fans, and sometimes we heard, as it seemed to us, distant shooting. After a short pause, Hitler informed me that he was dying tomorrow.

“I will be with you,” I answered him. “No,” he said resolutely, “your place is among the living...” Then he got up with difficulty, said goodbye, and, bending over, went to his room. I never saw him again.”

Hitler was well aware of the difficulties associated with the war against Russia. At a meeting with his generals on March 20, 1941, he noted that the greatness on Russian territory was in itself an intractable problem, that the Red Army had the most tanks in the world, that it had a very quantitatively strong aviation, and also that Germany's allies leave no illusions about their own combat effectiveness.

And on April 15, 1945, two weeks before the end, the Fuhrer justified his 1940 decision to attack the Soviet Union in a conversation with Bormann:

there was no other choice ... Our only chance to defeat Russia was to forestall its attack, for a defensive war against the Soviet

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Union was for us non-negotiable. In no way did we have the right to give the Red Army territorial advantages, to let it use our highways for the onslaught of red tanks, our railways for the transfer of its troops and equipment ... Already from that moment (the signing of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact. - B. S.) I knew that sooner or later Stalin would fall away and go over to the Allied camp. Should I have waited further in order to better arm myself?... We would have paid dearly for an indefinite delay. We would have had to give in to Bolshevik attempts to exert extortionate pressure on Finland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Turkey. This was out of the question." We agree that in fact the course of the war would not have changed at all if Hitler had delayed a little and Stalin had struck first. In either case, the Red Army would have been utterly defeated in 1941, but the Soviet Union would still have been among the victors. Four factors acted in favor of the Soviet side, completely irrespective of who would be the first and when would start the Soviet-German war. These factors are the population of the USSR, which was two and a half times greater than the population of the Reich with all the annexed territories; boundless Russian space, thanks to which the Red Army could retreat farther and farther into the interior of the country, and the Germans increasingly dispersed their forces due to the colossal lengthening of the front line and the need to occupy a huge territory, surpassing in area all the countries taken together, captured by Germany in Beyond Western Europe; the stability of the Soviet system due to the complete absence of an organized opposition,

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total propaganda and lack of information among the population, as well as a well-developed terror machine capable of surviving almost any crisis; and, finally, the help of Western

allies - the United States and the British Empire, both in the form of lend-lease and in the form of military operations of the allied armed forces on different fronts. Hitler's adjutant Nikolaus von Below argued: "The Russian space was too large for the Wehrmacht. The distance from Leningrad to Elbrus in the Caucasus was 5000 km. Hitler undertook a campaign against Russia, assuming that he would be able to break the enemy forces in the same way as he had succeeded in previous campaigns. In Russia, everything was different. The enemy had inexhaustible reserves. In these weeks and months (battles near Stalingrad. - B.S.), for the first time, the insufficiency of forces for the task set by Hitler was revealed.

The absence of even one of these factors doomed the USSR to defeat, the combination of all four made the defeat of Germany inevitable. Under these conditions, the actions of Stalin and Hitler in 1940 and 1941 meant very little in themselves. The alignment of forces was already determined in the autumn of 1939, and by June 1941 both the United States and England had no choice but to support the USSR, for the victory of Germany, which was stronger militarily and economically, created mortal danger for the Western powers. For some time, England fought to the death with Germany, and the USA, without formally entering the war yet, provided all possible support to its British ally. These two powers could not change the front on June 22 and support Germany, although Stalin's regime did not arouse any sympathy either in England or in the USA. President Franklin Roose-

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Weltesch during the period of the Finnish war called the Soviet dictatorship, which fell upon small but free Finland, "the most absolute dictatorship in the world." But after the German attack on the Soviet Union, Roosevelt and Churchill had no choice but to help this dictatorship.

And it must be admitted that the goals of both Germany and the USSR in the war that began between them were by no means noble, but expansionist, predatory. Germany, at the height of its success, took over most of continental Europe. If, as a result of the Second World War, the United States and England did not expand their territories in any way, but, on the contrary, ceded to the Soviet Union their former allies Czechoslovakia and Poland, as well as Romania and the Baltic states, not to mention other Balkan states that were in orbit Germany, the USSR expanded significantly to the West, acquiring also in the sphere of influence

Eastern Europe and part of Germany. And from the point of view of the final result, Stalin's policy in 1939-1941 cannot be called erroneous. He strove for expansion and created the necessary military and diplomatic conditions for its implementation.

Nevertheless, the surprise of the German attack, aided in an unforeseen way by Stalin's offensive plans, brought the Red Army many hard moments and additional losses. Since, until June 1941, friendship and good neighborliness with Germany were declared in the USSR, the society turned out to be morally unprepared for the Kvoine. As the Dutch historian Louis de Jong rightly noted, "perhaps, for no other people the German invasion was such a surprise as for the peoples of the Soviet Union."

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#### Battles of World War II: in the mirror of myth

In this chapter, I will focus on some of the myths associated with some of the most significant battles of World War II involving the Wehrmacht. At the same time, I am by no means going to give a general outline of this greatest war in the history of mankind, since such an outline, even in a concise form, would require a work much larger than this book. I will consider only some episodes, emphasizing that the existing opinions about the inferiority of the German strategy and the flagrant, screaming mistakes of Hitler and his generals both in the implementation of individual operations and in the conduct of the war as a whole are fairly exaggerated.

Contrary to popular belief, the pretext for the German attack on Polca was a provocation unorganized by the Germans with an attack by German criminals dressed in Polish military uniforms on a radio station in Gleiwitz in German Upper Silesia. The city of Gleiwitz was not even mentioned by name by Hitler either in a speech to the Reichstag or in an address to the troops. Just a few border incidents were mentioned, without any specifics, and it was alleged that on the morning of September 1, Polish soldiers invaded German territory for the first time (the Gleiwitz provocation was implied). Speaking in the Reichstag on September 1, 1939, on the occasion of the declaration of war on Poland, Hitler declared: "At first there was mobilization, but then there was an increase in terror and pressure on our compatriots and, with their slow squeezing out of the free city of Danzig, by economic, political, and in recent weeks by military means."

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Poland attacked the free city of Danzig. Moreover, Poland was not ready to settle the problem of the Corridor in a reasonable way, with equal treatment of both sides, and it did not think about fulfilling its obligations towards national minorities...

For four months I silently watched the events, although I did not stop issuing warnings. In the past few days, I've tightened up on those warnings. Three weeks ago I informed the Polish ambassador that if Poland continued to send notes to Danzig in the form of ultimatums, if Poland continued its oppression against the Germans, and if the Polish side did not abolish customs regulations aimed at destroying Danzig trade, then the Reich would not remain an idle observer. I have given no reason to doubt that those people who compare the Germany of today with the Germany of the past are deceiving themselves.

An attempt was made to justify the oppression of the Germans - there were demands that the Germans stop their provocations. I don't know what the provocations on the part of women and children are when they themselves are mistreated and some have been killed. I know one thing - no great power can passively observe what is happening for a long time ...

Deputies, if the German government and its Fuehrer would patiently put up with such treatment of Germany, they would only deserve to disappear from the political scene. However, he will be wrong who will regard my love for the world and my patience as weakness or even cowardice. I have therefore made up my mind, and last night I informed the British Government that, under the circumstances,

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Wah, I don't see any readiness on the part of the Polish government to engage in serious negotiations with us.

These proposals for mediation failed because at the time they were made, there was a sudden Polish general mobilization accompanied by a lot of Polish atrocities. They repeated last night. Recently-



but during the night we recorded 21 border incidents, last night there were 14, of which 3 were very serious. Therefore, I decided to resort to the language that the Poles have been using in conversation with us over the past months. This position of the Reich will not change.

First of all, I would like to thank Italy, which has always supported us. YOU MUST UNDERSTAND that we will not need foreign aid to carry on the struggle. We will complete our task ourselves. The neutral states assured us of their neutrality, just as we guarantee their neutrality on our part.

When statesmen in the West declare that this is contrary to their interests, I can only regret such statements. This cannot for a moment confuse me in the performance of my duties. What's more important? I solemnly assured them, and I repeat it, we ask nothing from the Western states and never will ask anything.

I announced that the frontier between France and Germany was final. I have repeatedly offered England friendship and, if necessary, the closest cooperation, but such offers cannot be only one-sided. They must find a response from the other side...

I am destined to solve (1) the Danzig problem; (2) the Corridor problem; and (5) to ensure

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a change in the relationship between Germany and Poland, which should guarantee peaceful coexistence. So I decided to fight until the existing Polish government does it or until another Polish government is ready to do it. I decided to free the German borders from the elements of uncertainty, the constant threat of civil war. I will ensure that peace reigns on the eastern frontier, just like on our other frontiers.

To this end, I will take the necessary measures, not contrary to the proposals I made in the Reichstag for the whole world, that is, I will not fight against women and children. I ordered my air force to be limited to attacks on military targets. If, however, the enemy decides that this gives him carte blanche to wage war by all means, he will receive a crushing furious response.

Last night, Polish soldiers fired on our territory for the first time. Until 5:45 a.m. we responded with fire, now we will oppose bombs with bombs. Those who use war gases should expect us to use them too. Those who adhere to the rules of humane warfare can count on us to do the same. I will continue to fight against anyone until the safety of the Reich and its rights are ensured.

Six years have passed since I have been working for the good of the German defense. More than 90 billion spent during this time on the armed forces. They are now better equipped and incomparable to what they were in '1914. My faith in them is unshakable. When I created these forces and now when I call on the German people to sacrifice and, if necessary, to self-sacrifice, I had and have the right to do so, because

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today I myself am fully prepared, as before, to sacrifice myself.

In the same speech, Hitler stated: "I want nothing else but to be the first soldier of the German Reich. That is why I put on again that uniform (from the time of the First World War), which has long been the most holy and dear to me. I take it off only after the victory, because I will not survive the defeat. In this uniform, five years and eight months later, the Fuhrer shot himself in the basement of the Reich Chancellery, which was approached by Soviet troops.

In an address to the Wehrmacht on September 1, 1939, Hitler insisted: "The Polish state abandoned the peaceful settlement of the conflict, as I wanted it, and took up arms. The Germans in Poland are subjected to bloody terror and driven out of their homes. Several cases of border violations, which are intolerable for a great state, prove that Poland does not intend to respect the borders of the Empire. |

To stop this madness, I have no other choice but to oppose force from now on. The German army will fight for the honor and life of a reborn Germany without hesitation. I hope that every soldier, faithful to the eternal German military traditions, will always remember that he is a representative of the National Socialist great Germany. Long live our people and our Reich."

Thus, the border incidents provoked by the Germans themselves were only one

of the reasons for war, and not the main one. Greater emphasis was placed on the problem of Danzig, the refusal of Poland to provide an extraterritorial corridor for the connection of the "Free City" with the Reich, and on the oppression of the Germans.

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who are minorities in Poland. According to various estimates, it numbered from 750 thousand to 1 million people. There were indeed cases of violence against members of the German minority, but it was only after the German invasion of Poland that Germans began to be killed. For example, in Torun, 34 Germans were shot, who were accused of signaling German aircraft. Prior to this, after the denunciation of the German-Polish non-aggression pact by Hitler on April 28, 1939, a number of restrictive measures were taken against the Germans in Poland. In particular, the vast majority of German schools and German agricultural cooperatives were closed, and a number of activists from German social and cultural organizations were arrested. All German clubs were closed and several shops belonging to the Germans were destroyed. At the same time, with the outbreak of the war, a number of Germans actually staged sabotage on bridges and roads and served as guides for the invading units of the Wehrmacht. In Upper Silesia, German partisan detachments attacked the positions of the Polish troops. But the scale of repressions against the Germans by the Polish authorities was incomparable with the punitive actions against the Poles, which were deployed by the occupation authorities of the General Government. —

The rapid capture of Poland was the first successful operation of the Wehrmacht in World War II. He silenced the opponents of the war inside Germany, led to the growth of Hitler's popularity. But few people know that the first victim of Hitler could not be Poland, but France. Only a few months before the start of the war, he seriously considered the possibility of first launching the main blow against France. On May 23, 1939, speaking to the gene

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ralami of the Wehrmacht, the Fuhrer argued: "The problem of Poland is inseparable from the collision with the West. Internal strength of Poland in the fight against Bolshevism

doubtful. Therefore, Polysa is also a dubious barrier from Russia. Military happiness in the West, which may lead to a quick end to the war, is in question, as is the behavior of Poland. The Polish regime will not resist Russian pressure. Poland sees a danger to itself in Germany's victory over the West and will try to deprive us of this victory.

Therefore, the question of sparing Poland disappears, and the decision remains to attack her at the first suitable opportunity. There is nothing to think about repeating the Czech Republic. It will come to a fight. The task is to isolate Poland. The success of isolating Poland is of decisive importance... A simultaneous clash with the West (France and England) must not be allowed.

If, however, there is no certainty that war with the West will be ruled out in the course of the German-Polish conflict, the struggle must be waged primarily against England and France.

A clash with Poland, initiated by an attack on it, can only succeed if the West remains on the sidelines. If this is not possible, then it is better to attack the West and liquidate Poland at the same time.

Only the hope that England and France would not be able to quickly take active action against Germany during the invasion of Politsa, and the calculation of Soviet assistance in the occupation of Poland, pushed Hitler to the decision to first deal with Poland and, contrary to his original intentions, only then go on the offensive in the west. This ensured the rapid defeat of Poland, but perhaps delayed the collapse of France for half a year. Difficult to say unambiguously

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to wonder whether the implementation of the "French Alternative" would have made the conditions for the conduct of the war more favorable for Germany. In this case, France would most likely have been defeated in the autumn of 1939. However, it is far from certain that the British Expeditionary Force would have been destroyed in such a development of events. It is very probable that then the British would not have had time to land on the Continent at all. And if they landed, they would be closer to the ports than in June 1940, which means it would be easier for them to evacuate back to the British Isles. In any case, the German offensive in the west as early as September 1939 could not lead to the defeat of England. Likewise, later

A late October or November attack, as originally planned by Hitler after the collapse of Poland, which proved impossible due to unfavorable weather conditions, could not overwhelm Germany's main enemy. The Luftwaffe at that moment was even weaker than in the summer of 1940, and had no real opportunity to prevent the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force, and then ensure the landing of the German army on the British Isles. The German navy in the autumn of 1939 was not much stronger than in the summer of 1940, since it had not yet suffered heavy losses during the Norwegian operation. However, even then it was an order of magnitude weaker than the British, in order to seriously think about using it to ensure the implementation of the Sea Lion plan - the landing of several dozen divisions on the British Isles. In addition, the Germans did not have enough transport ships for such a large-scale landing operation. By the way, even if France was defeated back in the autumn of 1939

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her May 1940. I think that even with such a development of events, Hitler would ultimately have abandoned its implementation and would have turned his eyes to the East. What would be the most likely scenario for the further course of the war?

Left alone with Germany, which had defeated France, Poland would most likely have tried to find mutual understanding with the Soviet Union. It is possible that then the Poles would have made an alliance with Stalin, as the Romanian king did in 1944, overthrowing Marshal Ion Antonescu. And Stalin most likely would have agreed to such an alliance so as not to be left alone with the victorious Reich. I note that in this case the geopolitical position of the Soviet Union would be even more favorable than in June 1941. It is unlikely that by that time Stalin would have managed to carry out aggression against Finland and the occupation of Romanian Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, as well as the occupation of the Baltic countries. In this case, the USSR could count on the neutrality of Finland and Rumania, and the Baltic countries might even conclude a defensive alliance with them against Germany.

By the way, under such circumstances, it is far from certain that Hitler would have decided to attack Poland and the Soviet Union in the spring and summer of 1940. It is quite impossible that he would have preferred to wait for the deployment of new Wehrmacht divisions, especially tank

out, and the strengthening of the Luftwaffe and would have postponed the war against Russia until 1941. Then the real scenario of the Barbarossa plan would have been approximately repeated, with the exception that on the side of the Wehrmacht, probably, there would not have been Finnish and Romanian divisions, and Polish divisions would have fought along with the Red Army. Probably the Soviet and Polish troops did not care

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would have been defeated, but it would not have been as comprehensive as the real disaster of 1941. And then, quite possibly, a turning point on the Eastern Front in favor of the Red Army would have been achieved already in 1942 or 1943.

But another scenario could have come true: Hitler would have risked attacking Poland and the USSR in the spring or early summer of 1940. In this case, the Wehrmacht, of course, would be weaker than a year later, and would have a much smaller number of tanks and aircraft. True, in such a case, Hitler probably would not have occupied Norway and the Balkans, and there would not have had to divert a significant part of the German armed forces, which could be used in the Eastern campaign. But what about the Red Army? In the spring of 1940, she was not yet armed with T-54 and KV tanks, as well as aircraft of new designs, capable of withstanding the German Me-109 fighters in terms of their tactical and technical characteristics. But it must be admitted that even in 1941 our fighters and commanders were not able to properly use the latest equipment, since they had not yet learned to control it with confidence. Therefore, the presence of new tanks and aircraft on the Soviet side had almost no effect on the course of hostilities in 1941. Accordingly, their absence in 1940 also could not significantly complicate the position of the Red Army. To a large extent, the absence of the latest types of military equipment would be compensated by the presence of allied Polish divisions, as well as the important circumstance that there would be no Romanian and Finnish divisions on the side of Germany. So Hitler's decision to abandon the first strike on France and deal, according to the classical canons of strategy, first with

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the greatest adversary - Poland, cannot be recognized as erroneous.

Another thing is that even if, by some miracle, the Barbarossa plan were to be fully implemented, it still would not have led Hitler to the final victory in World War II. Suppose - just suppose, because there were no chances for a real implementation of such a scenario, that the German troops during the 1941 campaign of the year, even before the start of the thaw, that is, before the middle of October, would have reached the coveted A-A line: Arkhangelsk - Astrakhan, which was declared as the ultimate goal of Operation Barbarossa. I emphasize that this would have been simply a miracle, since it required such a rate of advance of the Wehrmacht, which was never achieved not only during the French and Polish campaigns, but even during the most successful periods of the 1941 campaign in Russia. In fact, this required the complete collapse of the Stalinist regime, which could not have been foreseen in advance. So, let us imagine that the formal goal of "Barbarossa" would be achieved and the German troops in Russia would encounter only scattered resistance from the remnants of the Red Army far to the east of Moscow, incapable of offensive operations, and the actions of partisans. A similar scenario is realized in Robert Harris' fantasy novel *Vaterland*, better known for the Hollywood film of the same name. But after all, even a victory in Russia in itself did not guarantee Germany the victory of the war as a whole. After all, there was still the British Empire, and behind it the United States.

Only then, perhaps, the outcome of the war would have to be decided, in the event of the defeat of the USSR, by the use of the American atomic bomb not against Japan, but

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against Germany. Hitler would still have been unable to capture the British Isles due to the lack of sufficient aviation and navy forces. And the defeat of the USSR and in the event of the defeat of France back in 1939 looks unlikely. After all, even with such a development of events, the British Empire would have to help the Soviet Union with all available means in the struggle for its existence. And the United States would hardly have stood aside and, quite possibly, would have entered the war a year earlier, back in 1940. Most likely, the two powers would have succeeded sooner or later in restoring Soviet military power and in doing without the use of atomic weapons in densely populated Europe.

In fact, even the capture of Astrakhan and Arkhangelsk did not allow air forces to withdraw from

building the Ural industrial region, which left a powerful base for Soviet resistance. In any case, if the Soviet state had not collapsed in 1941, Germany's strategic position would be hopeless. A struggle of attrition was imposed on it, for which Hitler had neither the economic nor the human resources.

The real scenario of the offensive of the Wehrmacht in France was unexpectedly corrected by the weather, as it turned out later, in a direction favorable for the Germans. On October 9, 1939, Hitler issued an order for an offensive in the west, providing for an offensive operation on the northern extremity of the Western Front: "Further waiting will not lead to the refusal of Belgium and Holland from the neutrality favorable to our Western opponents, but will significantly increase the military power of our enemies, will deprive the neutral countries of faith in the final victory of Germany and will not contribute to the attraction of It

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lie on our side as a military ally ... In this regard, in order to continue hostilities, I order ...

a) Prepare an offensive operation on the northern flank of the Western Front in Luxembourg, Belgium and Holland. The offensive must be launched with maximum forces and in the shortest possible time.

6) The goal of the operation should be to defeat the maximum number of operational formations of the French army and the allies fighting on its side and at the same time capture as much of the territory of Holland, Belgium and Northern France as a springboard for deploying air and sea operations against England and ensuring the vital Ruhr area".

In the early days of the war, Hitler put forward the slogan: "Victory will be ours." And then repeated it more than once like a magic spell. However, he himself was far from sure of victory, which he spoke about more than once at meetings with ministers and generals. So, on November 25, 1939, after the victory over Poland and during the period of intensive preparations for the invasion of France, Hitler declared: "Let us all be inspired by the spirit of the great men in our history! Fate asks no more of us than of them. And as long as I am alive, I will think about the victory of my people. I will stop at nothing, I will destroy every



whoever is against me... I want to destroy the enemy. All the German people are behind me... Only those who struggle with fate can count on the help of Providence. I have experienced this many times over the past years. And in the current course of events, I also see his will. If we stand victorious in the struggle - and we will stand it! Our time will go down in the history of our people. I will stand or fall in this fight. Defeats

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my people 'I won't survive. No capitulation outside the country, no revolution inside it.'

The Fuhrer realized that any prolongation of the war would be disastrous for Germany. Therefore, Hitler was in a hurry to deal with France. On November 25, 1939, he told his adjutant von Below that it was necessary to put an end to the enemy in the West as soon as possible in order to untie his hands against Russia. Nikolaus von Below recalled: "He continued to reproach Brauchitsch and Halder for their negative attitude towards the offensive in the west. "The 100 German divisions which are now being formed outnumber the divisions of the British and French at the moment. But in six months everything can change," said the Fuhrer. This was his main concern, for he himself did not know at what pace the two large Western states would arm themselves. In addition, Hitler wanted his ground forces to be free by the spring for a major operation in the east against Russia. This is the first allusion about Russia that I have heard from the Fuehrer; he seemed utopian to me. For him, this was clearly a long-thought-out plan, which Hitler intended the Wehrmacht to implement. b

But the thaw prevented the immediate implementation of the plan to defeat France. As Jodl later noted, "Only the god of nature turned out to be stronger than Hitler. The cold snap never came. We had to wait for a dry spring. The date 10 May 1940 was chosen correctly. Hitler outlined the direction of a breakthrough through Maubeuge to Abbeville. He broke the plans of the General Staff to envelop the enemy by initially cautious, and then more and more persistent and unceremonious interference in the operational leadership. Hitler supported the Manstein plan for

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to carry the main blow in southern Belgium, including in the Ardennes, which were considered impassable for tanks, while the leadership of the land army was going, as in the First World War, to strike the main blow in northern and central Belgium. As a result, the correctness of Hitler and Manstein was proved. German tanks were able to overcome the Ardennes massif and carried a blow where the French command did not expect it.

It is widely believed among historians and the general public that Hitler issued a "stop order" that halted the advance of the German panzer divisions on Dunkirk in May 1940 and thereby allegedly saved the British Expeditionary Force from the defeat that was given in connection with the preparation of the war against the USSR. Some historians believe that it was the "stop order" that did not allow England to be withdrawn from the war and prevent a war on two fronts, and thereby predetermined the final defeat of Germany. Hitler allegedly wanted to keep his tank troops on the eve of a campaign against Russia. As if in the year that remained before Operation Barbarossa, they would not have been able to replenish with new equipment! Most importantly, by allowing the British troops to evacuate to the British Isles (moreover, the Fuhrer expected in advance that they would abandon all heavy weapons in France), Hitler was going to find a way to a separate peace with England in such a rather strange way. Otherwise, as if the proud Britons would have been humiliated and would have decided to fight to the end. As if the complete annihilation of the British troops would not make London even more inclined towards peace! In reality, everything was wrong with everything. The British have already uncovered the secret of German cipher machines for some time and read

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negotiations of the German headquarters in the West. This helped the British command to make the right decision. The counterattack of two British tank battalions at Arras so frightened the commander of Army Group South, Rundstedt, that he got Hitler to receive an order from Hitler on May 24 to stop the advance of German tanks at the English Channel along the Lens-Gravelines line, 16 km from Dunkirk. Two days later, the offensive resumed, but the British managed to hold the approaches to Dunkirk until 224,000 British soldiers and 114,000 French were evacuated by June 4. The Luftwaffe, contrary to Goering's promise, was unable to prevent the evacuation. For some reason, none of the historians pays attention to the following interesting circumstance: after the Germans stopped, Gort also did not immediately receive an order to retreat. In London, they decided whether there were still chances for the continuation of the struggle,

whether the French are standing, whether it makes sense to leave the English army in France. Only on May 26, the day the German offensive resumed, was Gort ordered to begin a retreat to Dunkirk with a view to subsequent evacuation. Here is what the well-known British theorist John Fuller, close to the Ministry of Defense, reports on this: "The rapid advance from the south, together with steady pressure from the east, forced the entire left wing of the allied armies to gather in an equilateral triangle, the base of which was the line Gravelines, Terneuzen, and the summit was located a little north of Cambrai. The northern half of the eastern side of the triangle was held by the Belgian army, which came under heavy bombardment on 24 May. On May 25, she began to give in. The next day, when all hope had disappeared that the French armies, finding

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south of the Somme would advance north, Lord Gort was ordered to retreat to the coast to save everything that could be saved from his army. There can be no doubt that if the German panzer groups had continued their unstoppable advance towards Dunkirk on the 24th, the British retreat would have begun correspondingly two days earlier. It was not about any delays or mistakes, but about completely objective things. The British army, unlike the French or Belgian, did not lose heart. The forces that Gort had at his disposal, including 5 tank brigades (the last, 5th, landed in France on May 25, only to cover the evacuation), armed with heavy tanks with strong armor, were quite enough to hold a small dune Kerk bridgehead, where the front line was small and the density of combat formations was maximum, for 10 days, necessary to prepare and carry out the evacuation. The calm, clear weather also helped the British. There was no disturbance at sea, and all vessels, including small tonnage schooners, yachts and boats, were used for evacuation. In addition, British aviation did not cede air supremacy over the English Channel to the Luftwaffe. The Hurricanes and Spitfires were not inferior to the Messerschmites, and the British pilots fought no worse than the aces of Hermann Goering. Therefore, there was no real chance for the Germans to destroy the Gort army. Nevertheless, the defeat of the allies during the operation "Gelb" was impressive. About a million French, Dutch and Belgians, who were surrounded, were taken prisoner.

Contrary to popular belief, Hitler had no chance of successfully landing in the British Isles in 1940. And the implementation of the operation

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He postponed the "Sea Lion" not because he was in a hurry to attack the USSR, but because he lost the air "Battle of Britain". The plan for an attack on the USSR, which later turned into Operation Barbarossa, really began to be prepared in parallel with Operation Sea Lion, a landing on the British Isles. However, they were going to implement them sequentially. First, no later than September 1940, the Wehrmacht was supposed to be in England and complete the conquest of the mistress of the seas by the end of the year. And then, having dealt with England, Hitler planned in the spring of 1941 to attack Russia with all the might of the faith.

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Colonel Nikolaus von Below, Hitler's adjutant from the Luftwaffe, spoke well about how the idea of the Russian campaign was born. He testifies to Val: "On July 21 (1940. - B.S.), Hitler had a conversation in the Imperial Chancellery with the commanders-in-chief of the Wehrmacht components. He said that it was not yet clear to him what would happen to England. If it continues the war, it means that it is waiting for a turning point in America's position or is hoping for help from Russia. The Führer saw a great risk in our plan to land in England. Stalin has a connection with England and is interested in keeping the course of political development in Europe in limbo. We must watch Russia very carefully and think over a plan of attack against her. Hitler attached the greatest importance to keeping this plan secret, while still at the level of thinking through it by the General Staff, in order to clarify to himself the scope of this task, to get an idea of its timing and goals.

The Führer then went to the Bayreuth Festival. On July 23, he visited Wagner's "Twilight of the Gods". It was his only and last

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me war visiting Wagner celebrations. Spectacles during the war years were given mainly for workers of military enterprises and wounded soldiers.

In the days that followed, Hitler received (partly in Berlin and partly on the Obersalzberg) a number of official visitors. The Romanian, Bulgarian and Slovak prime ministers visited to fight for the rounding off and preservation of their state territories. A new order was beginning to take shape in the region. The Führer still preferred not to take final steps and resolve the Balkan issues for the time being.

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His head was constantly occupied with thoughts about events in the Russian region. More than once he told himself to play a documentary film about the winter battles on the Finnish border, but, like half a year ago, he was fascinated, because he could not draw final conclusions from it about the motorization, armament and combat strength of the Russian army.

On July 51, Hitler again summoned the commanders-in-chief of the three component parts of the Wehrmacht together with their chiefs of general staffs. First, Roeder reported on the ongoing work on the Sea Lion. He named the days between September 19 and 26 as possible dates for the operation. But it would have been better to move her 1941 canopy. The Fuhrer did not go for this, but decided to hold September 15th. Whether it starts on the day indicated will depend on the Luftwaffe, which is to begin intensified raids on British fighter airfields, harbors and the navy in the next few days. If she succeeds, the Sea Lion will go into action. Otherwise, this operation will have to be postponed until 1941. Then Hitler turned to the problem of Russia. He uve

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ren that the British found new contact with her. The Fuhrer assumed a Russian attack beginning in the autumn of 1941. If Russia is defeated, England will lose a lot of help. Hitler announced his final decision: to attack Russia in the spring of 1941. Operations against her should lead to visible success in the summer of 1941. Halder was instructed to radically study the questions connected with this.

And here is how General Hermann Goth, the former commander of the 35th Panzer Group, outlined the first stages of developing a plan for an attack on Russia: He was instructed to start working on the Russian problem and think over the preparations for it. Quite unexpectedly, the German General Staff was given a task that it had not dealt with for 25 years. Not yet knowing the purpose of this war, the General Staff began its preparations. Already on July 6, 1940, the head of the "Foreign Armies of the East" department reported to the chief of the general staff the basic data for preparing such an operation. It followed from them that the most favorable direction for the development of the operation, provided that the flank adjoins the Baltic Sea, is the Moscow direction, actions on which will force the enemy grouping located in Ukraine and Chern-

sea coast, to fight with an inverted front. The next day, the head of the operational department proposed the creation of a strong southern grouping. However, the chief of the general staff stated that he considered it more expedient to create a strong northern grouping and intended from the very beginning to plan the operation with such a calculation.

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that the large enemy forces, which are part of the southern grouping, were forced, as a result of the German offensive from Moscow to the south, to fight with an inverted front. On July 29, the chief of staff of the 18th Army, which was then in the East, was summoned to Berlin, where he was instructed to develop a plan of operation against Russia. At this time, Hitler, who was about to launch an offensive against Russia in the autumn, was informed that the concentration and deployment of troops along the eastern border would take from four to six weeks. The purpose of the operations was indicated "to defeat the Russian army, or at least to advance into the depths of Russian territory to such an extent as to exclude the possibility of enemy air raids on Berlin and the Silesian industrial region."

On July 31, Hitler made his intentions more specific and stated that he would most willingly launch an offensive against Russia this year. But this cannot be done, since hostilities will take over the winter, and a pause is dangerous; the operation makes sense only if we defeat the Russian state with one blow. Its goal is the destruction of Russia's manpower. One capture of territory is not enough. Operations should develop in two directions: the first - to Kyiv (the flank adjoins the Dnieper) and the second - through the Baltic to Moscow. After that, the troops advancing from the north and south unite. For these operations, Hitler considered 120 German divisions sufficient. 60 divisions were left for the occupation of Norway, France, Belgium and Holland.

On September 26, Hitler spoke alone with the grand admiral. From the statements of the Führer after discussing the situation, I concluded that Raeder had spoken out against the war with Russia and was in favor of the use of

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our forces in the eastern Mediterranean, that is, against Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, all the way to Turkey. To this the Führer replied that although Raeder's point of view must be taken into account, the position of Spain must first be probed. The most important thing in the Mediterranean is Gibraltar. When it is completely in Spanish or German hands, the question of the eastern Mediterranean can also be dealt with more closely.

In fact, Raeder did not believe in the success of the Sea Lion, and Hitler was skeptical about the fight in the Mediterranean, where the main role was to be played by the fleet and air force, which Germany had weak relative to the British. In the autumn of 1940, Hitler ordered the construction of a new headquarters in East Prussia to begin in April 1941.'

The next day, August 1, 1940, Hitler issued "Directive No. 17 on the conduct of the air and sea war against England." It said: "In order to create the preconditions for the final defeat of England, I intend to wage an air and sea war against England in a more acute form than hitherto ... British aviation.

On November 1, 1940, Goebbels, not yet aware of Hitler's decision to attack the USSR, wrote in his diary: "The British are a stubborn people. They will still hold out. The Führer will attack them until they are defeated and knocked to the ground. When this will happen, no one knows. But the goal is clear. They must finally get out of Europe. And here they will not find their continental sword. Russia? Stalin is too cunning for this. And our Wehrmacht is too strong. Stalin wants to earn something on

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this case, but by no means take an indefinite risk. We will not let anyone near the Romanian oil fields. Our bombs on England and our torpedoes will soften Churchill. You just have to be patient and keep pushing forward."

However, by early September 1940, the Luftwaffe was losing the Battle of Britain. Without air supremacy, it was pointless to start landing on the British Isles. The Germans who landed

The German divisions would very quickly turn into a camp of armed prisoners, since there was no way to organize the supply of supplies for them: the German ships would be easily destroyed by the British fleet and aircraft.

As Hitler's adjutant from the Luftwaffe, Colonel Nikolaus von Below, rightly noted, "from an operational point of view, the Luftwaffe no longer played any role after the air battle for England and was not capable of performing major tasks. The readiness of the aviators to act was not answered by the incorrect structure of the Luftwaffe. True, she still did a lot to support the ground forces, but in the west - as the summer of 1944 clearly showed - in the defense of the Reich, she was hopelessly inferior to aviation against the nickname. As for the increasing quality of Russian front-line aviation, for a considerable time our pilots surpassed it with their superior skill. However, in the future, they began to yield here as well due to the continued depreciation of the material part. Due to the lack of fuel (and despite the fact that we had enough planes), the fighting was carried out by poorly trained and inexperienced pilots, who became easy prey for the British and Americans.

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According to von Below, "Hitler was one of the first in the German command to realize that the air war against England had not achieved its goal and could not achieve it. The content of his frequent conversations about this with Goering is unknown to anyone. However, from the remarks of the Fuhrer I heard, I understood that he did not share Goering's views on air warfare. And since the air battle over the English Channel did not bring victory and the Royal Air Force remained combat-ready, the Fuhrer had to make other decisions. And he is good:

knew it...

On September 15, Hitler invited the commanders-in-chief of the three Wehrmacht units and the newly promoted colonel-generals to dinner and a meeting on technical matters, especially with regard to tanks and anti-tank weapons. The next day, he again summoned all the commanders-in-chief, together with their chiefs of general staff, to discuss the Sea Lion action. Not all of them already believed in its feasibility. But the Führer still presented the Sea Lion as the best solution at the time for success in the fight against England. Preparations for the landing were completed, now all that was required was



four or five days of good weather, for the small boats were not very suitable for a naval operation. In addition, the Luftwaffe had to be able to fly at least a few days from morning to evening. The weather was extremely unstable. And yet, the Fuhrer decided not to cancel the operation for the time being. Let the English remain in a state of uncertainty! To the demand of the Luftwaffe to allow her air raids on residential areas of cities, Hitler objected: it is much more important to produce them on military installations. Raids with the aim of causing mass panic - only

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as a last resort, because the threat of British counter-raids on German cities is too great.

This conversation left me with the impression that Hitler had already given up hope of a successful invasion of England next spring. In the autumn of 1940, he was frightened by the unknown: would this rather impromptu crossing of the sea water barrier succeed? He lost confidence.

On September 22 and 24, Hitler received the aviators Molders and Galland, who had won 40 victories in air battles each, and wanted to get from them a clear and sober picture of the air war. Comparing this with what he was told about his own Luftwaffe, he realized that British aviation was still stronger. In addition, the constantly changing weather prevented us from flying continuously for more than four or five days in a row. Molders stressed that each such action is possible only once, because then it requires the restoration of the flight crew. The quality of British aircraft commanders is the same as that of German ones. But they, of course, have an incomparable advantage - they fly over their own country. A downed Englishman can save himself by jumping with a parachute, and then he is ready for a new howl there. The commander of the German aircraft in this case perishes. The conversation made a great impression on the Fuhrer, reinforcing his intention to risk invasion only if all the cards were in his hands.

After the cancellation of the Sea Lion, it became clear to Hitler and his generals that in 1941, with the beginning of the campaign against Russia, they could not avoid a war on two fronts, against which Bismarck warned Germany and which killed the Kaiser in the First World War. But there was no way out, as Hitler believed. The defeat of England was postponed for an indefinitely long period.

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It would still have been impossible to put it out of action before Hitler's supposed time of Russia's attack on Germany - no later than 1945 - anyway.

It is interesting to hear the opinion on the possibility of landing in England by Luftwaffe Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, probably the most talented aviation and combined arms commander of the Wehrmacht, who was the most successful throughout the war. He believed that the Sea Lion had a chance of success only if the operation was undertaken shortly after the evacuation of the British from Dunkirk, and on the condition that the Luftwaffe played a decisive role in the operation. The operation of the Luftwaffe against England, which lasted from August 8 to September 15, 1940 and was aimed at destroying British aviation, was considered by the field marshal to be too extended in time and space. The constant change in the goals of air operations also played a negative role. Even if successful, it would have resulted in heavy losses for the Luftwaffe. According to Kesselring, air strikes should have taken only a short period of time and become direct preparation for the invasion. Indeed, the date set by Hitler for the beginning of the landings in England - mid-September - was completely unrealistic. Even if the Luftwaffe had won the Battle of Britain and the landings had been successful, the German troops in England would have been trapped and soon forced to surrender. After all, already from the end of September, weather conditions, constant storms in the English Channel, would have made it practically impossible to regularly supply the expeditionary force, and it would certainly not have been possible to break the British resistance in two weeks. Kesselring stated in his memoirs: "He who does not risk is not a victory.

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No! .. The actions of the aviation that remained at the disposal of the British could only be contained by anti-aircraft artillery fire ... Thanks to appropriate tactics, British fighter aircraft could be dispersed, treated with fire and destroyed. Kesselring also pinned great hopes on Siebel's self-propelled ferries, paratroopers, and transport aircraft. Since the outcome of the war is known, it must be admitted that the landing thus undertaken immediately after Dunkirk had at least some chance of success. But, as Kesselring points out, even

in the autumn of 1959, after the victory in Poland, no plans for a landing in England had yet been developed. No one expected such a rapid collapse of France. Therefore, in June 1940, the Wehrmacht had practically no vehicles for a large-scale landing.

On December 5, 1940, Hitler received Brauchitsch and Belov and, according to von Belov, told them something like the following about a future war with Russia: "The Russian man is inferior, and the Russian army is deprived of command. When attacking Russia, the danger of pushing the Russians into retreat must be avoided. Offensive operations should be carried out in such a way as to divide the Russian army into separate sections and take it prisoner. It is necessary to find such starting positions that would make it possible to carry out major encirclement operations. Hitler expected great partial successes, which should lead to someone that at some point in Russia there will be complete disorganization. The attack on Russia was for him a matter of course."

Regarding the first battles of the Barbarossa plan, there is an opinion among Russian and foreign historians that almost all Soviet aircraft were destroyed by powerful bombing and assault strikes.

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mi Luftwaffe. In fact, the bulk of Soviet aviation in the first days did not die at airfields, but in air battles, in which the complete superiority of Luftwaffe aces over poorly trained and badly controlled Soviet pilots was revealed. Already by July 11, 1941, the number of destroyed and damaged Soviet aircraft, according to German data, reached 6293, and by August 10 - 10 thousand aircraft, mainly in air battles. Later, for several months, Soviet aircraft very rarely appeared in the sky, and their losses decreased.

As for aircraft at airfields, on the first day of the war, heavy losses were noted here only in the zone of the Western Front. Here played a role as a mistake of the commander of the Western Front, General D.G. Pavlov, who placed airfields near the very border, only 15-70 kilometers away, and the art of Field Marshal Kesselring, commander of the 2nd Air Fleet, which supported the most powerful Army Group Center. He applied an original technique that ensured complete success. The bombers approached the Soviet airfields at high altitude exactly at 3 o'clock.

15 minutes, simultaneously with the beginning of artillery preparation, which ensured complete surprise for the fall. Three bombers were thrown against each airfield with crews who had experience in night flights. As a result, on June 22, 528 out of 1909 combat aircraft were destroyed at the airfields of the Western Front, and the destroyed aircraft mainly belonged to three of the six air divisions of the district (9th, 10th and 11th), which were located near the border itself. On the Southwestern Front, 204 aircraft out of 20,053 were killed on the ground,

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on the Northwestern Front - 32 out of 1140 and on the Southern Front - 23 out of 950. The bulk of Soviet pilots died in air battles. Colonel Werner Molders, German ace and fighter aviation inspector, reported: "The stubbornness of the Russian pilots was proverbial: they did not evade anti-aircraft artillery fire and did not make any defensive maneuvers when German fighters swooped down on them. Their losses were enormous. Often not a single aircraft from the group participating in the raid managed to survive. But they came back again and again. Should they be admired or shake their heads at the senselessness of their sacrifice?"

And here is how Kesselring assessed Soviet intentions in June 1941 in his memoirs: "Hitler's point of view, which consisted in the fact that the Russians use the first opportunity to attack us, seemed to me absolutely correct. The Kremlin could easily find a pretext for a surprise attack. In any case, time was on the side of the Russians, and they, like no one else, knew how to use it properly. From the reports of Luftwaffe specialists who recently visited Russia, I was aware of the gigantic scale program for building up the military-industrial potential and the production of weapons, which the Russians began to carry out and which we would soon be unable to keep up with. Unfortunately, Goering and Hitler considered these reports to be the fruits of an overactive imagination. Thus, the field marshal, unlike many other generals and historians, by no means considered Hitler's attack on Stalin a mistake, but he does not assert that the Red Army was preparing to attack the Reich as early as 1941. Kesselring at the same time emphasizes the offensive nature of the name

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rhennium of a potential adversary. The number of Soviet divisions from September 1938 to May 1941 in the 2300-kilometer border zone increased from 65 to 189 (according to Soviet data - up to 172), and the troops were concentrated mainly in the ledges that wedged into German territory. In the Bialystok ledge alone, it was alleged that up to 50 formations were stationed. And "the placement of airfields of Russian military aviation near the border spoke eloquently of the preparation of actions of an offensive nature." Kesselring believes that the disadvantage of Barbarossa was too late a start, although he admits that by an earlier date, in particular, his 2nd Air Fleet could not be ready for military operations, both due to a lack of a reserve of flight personnel and anti-aircraft artillery, and because of the incomplete engineering and construction work and heavy rains, which slowed down the preparations for the invasion. To the pluses, he refers to the fact that "during two large and two small military campaigns, we were able to gain experience that the Russians had nothing to oppose." Kesselring is surprised that Soviet aviation was taken by surprise at the airfields, because "after June 20, the Kremlin could no longer have any illusions." I note that the field marshal fairly accurately assesses both the number of Soviet troops and the losses they suffered in armaments and military equipment. He believes that the army group "Center" was opposed by 1.5-2 million military personnel, the army group "South" - the same number and somewhat smaller grouping - the army group "North". On the very first day, up to 2,500 aircraft were destroyed on the ground and in the air, and in total, by the beginning of December 1941, the 2nd Air Fleet alone destroyed 6,670 aircraft, 1,900 tanks, 1,950 guns, 26,000 troops.

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cars and 2800 trains. According to Soviet data, by the end of 1941, a total of 17.9 thousand combat aircraft were lost, including 10.5 thousand in battles. Since the most intensive hostilities took place precisely on the front of Army Group Center, it can be assumed that the Kesselring fleet could have accounted for more than half of Soviet combat losses. In addition, part of the operational losses can be included in the number of 6670 aircraft.

In Russian historiography and among the people, it is widely believed that all raids on Moscow were unsuccessful for the Germans, and the Luftwaffe suffered disastrously high losses in them. In really-

However, things were not at all so favorable for the Soviet side. For example, when on July 22, 1941, the first air raid on Moscow was carried out by the Luftwaffe at night, 200 bombers took part in it, of which, according to various estimates, from 4 to 22 were shot down. These losses can by no means be called catastrophic, especially considering that the true figure of losses is closer to the lower than to the upper limit. During the raid, the Germans used the latest 2.5-ton bombs. 130 Muscovites died, 662 were injured, 57 buildings were destroyed. As Kesselring wrote in his memoirs, "the raids on Moscow caused me great concern. Downed crews had to be permanently deleted from the lists of personnel. The effectiveness of the actions of Russian anti-aircraft gunners and illuminators, who used searchlights, impressed even those of our pilots who happened to fly over England. In addition, gradually more and more Russian fighters began to appear in the air - fortunately, only during the daytime. The results of the bombing of the Russian capital

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were somewhat less impressive than I expected, but this can be explained by the size of the target area, the blinding effect of the searchlights, which interfered with our pilots, and also by the fact that the bomb load of our aircraft had to be reduced due to the need to take additional fuel on board. However, a few years later, when I was interrogated in the POW camp at Mondorf in 1945, a Russian woman who acted as an interpreter once mentioned the "terrible consequences of the bombings", and Iyas happily changed his former opinion about the degree of success of our actions. valiant pilot

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The German field marshal paid tribute to the Moscow air defense fighters, pilots, anti-aircraft gunners, searchlights. At the same time, it is clear from his story that at night the Soviet fighters were not in a position to fight the German bombers. Kesselring does not speak of especially heavy losses, although he admits that, since even the surviving pilots of downed aircraft were captured, they were much more sensitive than during raids in the front line. The reason why, in terms of their effectiveness, the German raids on Moscow could not be compared with the later bombing of German cities by the Anglo-American aircraft, was the lack of strategic bombers in the Luftwaffe with a large bomb load and range.

One of the myths rooted in historiography

World War II lies in the fact that in August 1941, Hitler made a fatal mistake by refusing to continue the offensive against Moscow, but by throwing the main forces of his tank troops at Kiev

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and Leningrad. If it had been decided otherwise, then, they say, it would have been possible to capture Moscow and end the war in 1941.

However, an objective consideration of this issue shows that a change in priorities in German goals would only lead to some particular changes in the results of hostilities, but would not change their outcome, since the Wehrmacht simply did not have the strength to achieve all the goals set by the Barbarossa plan. ". And already a month after the start of the war in Russia, the German leadership had serious doubts about the possibility of simultaneously achieving the main strategic goals in all directions. As early as July 23, 1941, Halder wrote in his diary: "Report from the Führer. I reported on the position of the enemy and raised the question of the ultimate goals of the operation. The Führer continues to stubbornly adhere to his goals, regardless of the enemy and other factors. Von Bock will be forced to give up his tank groups and continue the attack on Moscow with one infantry. At the moment, the Führer is not interested in Moscow at all, and all his attention is riveted to Leningrad ... The Führer sees the goal of the operation in the destruction of enemy forces in the Leningrad region even before reaching the Moscow region. He believes that by the time of the autumn rains, our mobile formations will be able to reach the Volga and enter the Caucasus. It remains to be wished that this calculation was correct. In general, it is a pity for the time lost on the report.

On August 4, 1941, the chief of the German General Staff, General Franz Halder, wrote in his diary: "The Führer attaches particular importance to Leningrad, as well as the capture of the southern regions - coal, iron, the destruction of the enemy air base in the Crimea; mastered

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The Führer does not attach any importance to Moscow's influence." Guderian recalled the meeting on August 4: "Each participant in the meeting was given the opportunity in turn to express his point of view in such a way that no one knew what the previous one was talking about.

meeting participant. All the generals of Army Group Center were unanimous in favor of continuing the offensive against Moscow, which was of decisive importance. Hoth stated that his panzer group could not start the offensive until 29 August. I stated that I would be ready by August 15th. Then Hitler spoke in the presence of all participants in the meeting. He stated that his first target was the industrial area of Leningrad. The question of whether to attack Moscow or Ukraine next has not yet been finally decided. Hitler himself was inclined to start with an attack on the Ukraine, for Army Group South was also making some progress at the present time. In addition, he believed that the raw material and food resources of Ukraine were essential for the further conduct of the war and that, finally, an offensive against Ukraine would give him the opportunity to wrest Crimea from the hands of the Russians, which, according to Hitler, was "an aircraft carrier of the Soviet Union, from where raids are being carried out on the oil fields of Romania ... By the beginning of winter, he hoped to seize Moscow and Kharkov. The final decision on this most important issue for us about the further course of the war was not taken that day by the TO.

Guderian, just in case, began to prepare his 2nd Panzer Group for an attack on Moscow. On August 7, 1941, Halder wrote in his diary: "A conversation with General Jodl: what are our main goals: do we want to defeat the enemy or are we pursuing economic goals (capturing the Ukraine and the Caucasus). Yodel: fu

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Rer believes that both goals can be achieved at the same time. We must do this, because otherwise we will not be able to defeat the enemy before the onset

autumn ... Jodl is convinced of the correctness of these provisions and will act on this basis. We need to get the Fuhrer's consent ... to send all the forces of the Bock Army Group to the capture of Moscow. But on August 11, the offensive plan, which provided for the main blow from Roslavl to Vyazma, was rejected by the command of the ground forces. Then Guderian proposed "withdrawing troops from the Elninskaya arc, which is no longer necessary for us, where we all the time suffered heavy losses. However, the command of the army group and the OKH (high command of the ground forces. - B.S.) rejected this proposal, which proceeded from the need to save human



lives, under the absurd pretext that "it is even more difficult for the enemy on this sector of the front than for us." On August 21, Hitler rejected the OKH proposal for an attack on Moscow and issued a directive to prepare strikes against Leningrad and the Ukraine. Tanks from Army Group Center were heading there. Guderian tried unsuccessfully three days later to persuade the Führer to advance on Moscow. Hitler insisted on the priority of mastering the raw materials and food resources of Ukraine. On August 22, 1941, he wrote a memorandum to the high command of the German armed forces, where he demanded, first of all, "to seize Russian positions in the Baltic states and seize the regions of Ukraine and the Black Sea region - an important raw material and food base for the reconstruction of the Russian armed forces."

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Guderian and many other German generals were convinced to the end of their days that due to the turn to the south, a very real chance was missed to capture "Moscow even before the winter of 1941, inflict a decisive defeat on the Red Army and end the war victoriously. I think that there is of course, if Army Group Center had moved on Moscow as early as the 20th of August, it would have been able to encircle and destroy the main forces of the fronts of the western direction in the area Vyazma and Bryansk. However, then, choosing between Kiev and Moscow, Stalin would certainly have preferred to sacrifice the capital of Ukraine in order to save the capital of the USSR and the heart of Russia. He would have transferred troops from the Southwestern Front to Moscow, which could have been done much faster. In the end, the Germans would still not have been able to capture the capital, and the troops of the Southwestern Front would have retained their combat effectiveness to a greater extent than after the Kiev catastrophe.

In fact, the option of winning both the war with the Soviet Union and the Second World War as a whole did not exist for Germany in 1941 in principle. In the event that the attack on Moscow had been undertaken back in August, Stalin would have had at his disposal a large combat-ready grouping of troops of the Southwestern Front, through which it would be possible both to strengthen the defense of Moscow and to try to strike at the flank of the army group "Center". In the second case, the Germans would have had to undertake an operation against this front, similar to the one they carried out in practice in August-September. And in the first case,

overcoming the resistance of reinforcements,

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thrown to Moscow from the south, additional forces and time would have to be expended, which would still not make it possible to capture the Soviet capital even before the start of the thaw. In addition, in both of these hypothetical cases, the troops of the Southwestern Front would hardly have suffered such catastrophic losses as in the real Kiev encirclement. So it is hardly worth talking about some serious mistake by Hitler in this case.

According to von Below, "Hitler assessed the military situation in the summer of 1941 very positively. He held the view that Stalin would be compelled during the course of September to throw his last reserves to the front. If these formations are drained of blood, stubborn resistance will cease, and our troops will only have to march forward. This optimism was justified on certain days, but then reports of stubborn resistance and heavy fighting began to arrive again. On the whole, the Red Army was in a state of partly controlled and partly unregulated retreat.

It was still an open question whether or not to carry out an offensive against Moscow this year. Hitler was against it, but yielded to the insistence of the ground forces.

However, even at the height of the battle for Kyiv, Hitler no longer doubted that it would not be possible to complete the Russian campaign in 1941. On September 13, 1941, the Chief of the German General Staff, Franz Halder, quoted in his diary an excerpt from a review of the strategic situation approved by Hitler: "The defeat of Russia is the immediate and decisive goal of the war, to achieve which all forces not necessary on other fronts should be used. Since this goal will not be reached within

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1941, the continuation of the Eastern Campaign in 1942 must now be at the forefront of our strategic planning. It was an acknowledgment of the collapse of hopes for a blitzkrieg. Therefore, the last offensive against Moscow, undertaken at the beginning of October 1941, contrary to popular belief, was

The goal was not to completely eliminate Soviet resistance, but only to create more favorable positions for the 1942 campaign. At the same time, the question of whether it would be necessary to occupy Moscow remained open until the end of October.

On October 5, 1941, speaking on the occasion of the start of the "winter aid" campaign, Hitler declared: "The number of prisoners now has reached approximately 2,500,000 Russians. The number of guns captured or destroyed by our hands is approximately 22,000. The number of tanks captured or destroyed by our hands is over 18,000. The number of aircraft destroyed on the ground and shot down is over 14,500." He also stated: "We had no idea how grandiose were the preparations of this enemy against Germany and Europe and how incredibly great the danger was, how we miraculously avoided the destruction not only of Germany, but of all Europe.

What can I say now. I am only saying this today because I can say that this enemy is already crushed and will never rise again.

His power was concentrated against Europe, which, unfortunately, did not know anything about it, and many even now do not have the slightest idea about it. This would be the second invasion of Genghis Khan. The fact that this danger was averted is due primarily to the bravery, endurance and dedication of the German soldiers, as well as to the dedication of our allies... The front line, on which

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German soldiers are fighting, from 800 to 1000 kilometers on the map. Its real length is one and a half to two times greater.

They fight on a front of gigantic proportions against enemies that are not human, but rather animals or beasts. Now we know what Bolshevism turns people into.

We cannot describe to the civilian population of the Fatherland what is happening in the East. It transcends all the most ominous that can be conceived by the human imagination. The enemy fights with bestial bloodlust on the one hand, and out of fear of the commissars on the other.

Here the Fuhrer spoke of the Reich and the Wehrmacht in almost the same words that Stalin spoke of the Soviet Union and the Red Army:

ends, the German soldier, the representative of the workers and peasants, the true representative of the popular masses, will triumph in it.

Victory will be won by the German rear: millions of workers—men and women—peasants, the creative intelligentsia. All these millions will be winners. Those who work on the home front have a right to know that this new state will be built for THEM.

The experience at the front will give rise to an even greater number of fanatical National Socialists. One law rules in Germany: the one who is capable of leading oneself - whether in the military, political or economic field - will be respected and valued in Germany, but even more respected will be a simple worker, without whose support the greatest ruler will not achieve anything. This is decisive.

The German people can be proud today. He has the best political leaders, the best

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generals, the best engineers and managers in the economy, as well as the best workers, the best peasants - the best people.

To solder all these people into one indissoluble community—this is the task that we solve independently as National Socialists. This task confronts Germany more clearly than ever before." |

It is interesting that while Stalin, in the course of the war, placed more and more emphasis on national values, Hitler increasingly addressed the Germans as working people. As a result, the slogans and words of the two dictatorships became almost interchangeable. The numbers of Soviet losses given by Hitler were generally true. As for the aircraft, we have already found out. As for tanks, according to official Soviet data, by the end of 1941, the Red Army had irrevocably lost 20,500 tanks and self-propelled guns, i.e. almost all the armored vehicles available at the beginning of the war.

Initially, the offensive against Moscow developed successfully. The main forces of the three Soviet fronts defending the capital were surrounded. 665 thousand people were captured. On October 8, 1941, Halder wrote in his diary: "In the area north of the Orel-Bryansk highway, enemy troops are withdrawing in eastern and north-eastern directions. Thus, there still remains a gap in our large system of encirclement... The enemy is trying to bring some more forces closer to Moscow, primarily from the north. One-

However, these hastily assembled troops are unlikely to be sufficient to prevent a strong threat to Moscow created by our troops, so that with more or less correct leadership and relatively favorable weather, the encirclement of Moscow should succeed.

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However, the weather, as it usually happens in autumn, deteriorated, and the Wehrmacht could not, for this reason, and also because of the lack of fuel, immediately continue the offensive against Moscow, although individual reconnaissance units reached its outskirts.

On November 3, 1941, Halder wrote in his diary: "I think that the enemy in the Leningrad region is evacuating and is trying to withdraw troops in the direction of Rybinsk in order to concentrate all his forces in the Moscow region and hold this region. By these measures, the enemy seeks to preserve the possibility of going over to the offensive again with an army rebuilt with forces equipped with the help of the industrial base of the Urals. Perhaps this counteroffensive will follow not in 1942, but later. And on November 15, 1941, he noted in his diary: ".. Our entire operation to pursue the enemy after a double battle in the Bryansk, Vyazma region has now been suspended due to unfavorable autumn weather." At this point, Hitler became even more convinced that the war would have to continue into the next year.

On November 19, 1941, the Chief of the German General Staff, Franz Halder, wrote in his diary: "The Führer said that on the whole it might be expected that both warring groups of countries, not being able to destroy one another, would come to a compromise agreement." This was Hitler's first admission that Russia could not be destroyed and that Germany could not win the final war.

By the end of November, the moral and material forces of the German troops advancing on Moscow had reached their limit. On November 27, 1941, the quartermaster general of the German General Staff Eduard Wagner reported to his chief Franz Gal

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deru: "Our troops are on the eve of exhaustion of material and human forces. We are facing the threat of a severe winter... Our troops spare the local inhabitants too much. It is necessary to move on to forced requisitions." However, the Germans did not have time to prepare for winter before the start of the Soviet counteroffensive. In fact, by the time the Soviet counter-offensive began, the Germans near Moscow were forced to go on the defensive.

Contrary to the opinion often defended by some German generals and Soviet historians, Hitler's actions after the start of the Soviet counter-offensive in early December were correct.

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On December 5, 1941, the day it began, Halder wrote in his diary: "Guderian decided to withdraw troops from Tula. Frost 36 degrees below zero. The planned offensive of the 3rd and 4th Panzer Groups should have been cancelled. The enemy has broken through our front in the region east of Kalinin... Von Bock, Commander of Army Group Center, reports: forces have dried up. The 4th Panzer Group will no longer be able to attack tomorrow. Tomorrow he will report whether there is a need to withdraw the troops. Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces von Brauchitsch announced his decision to retire.

Such an early counteroffensive came as a surprise to both Hitler and his generals. They expected that the Red Army was defeated to a much greater extent than it actually was. The Germans also underestimated the ability of Stalin and his generals to throw completely untrained reinforcements into battle, the ability of the Soviet people to quietly go to certain death, as well as the power of the Soviet military industry, even under evacuation conditions, often surpassed the German ones.

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On December 6, 1941, Halder noted: "The Führer declared that it was impossible to explain the problem of the balance of power by figures alone. Our losses are 500,000 men. The Russians lost 8-10 million people. Russian losses are at least 10 times our losses. They lost 78 thousand guns. Enemy artillery has reached zero level. At that moment, Hitler still did not know anything about the beginning of the Soviet counteroffensive. But on the whole he assessed the Soviet losses correctly. By that time, the Germans had captured almost 4 million prisoners alone. Quantity

The number of Red Army soldiers who died on the battlefield and died from wounds, based on the dynamics of the number of wounded throughout the war, can be estimated at 1.6 million people. With the same wounded, the total losses, in all likelihood, exceeded 8 million people.

Von Below noted in his memoirs that after the start of the Soviet counter-offensive near Moscow, "Hitler considered the position of Army Group Center with great anxiety. He assumed that the Russians intended to carry out a major counter-offensive.

About December 1941, Halder wrote in his diary: "The troops are losing confidence in their command. The combat power of the infantry has decreased! Measures are being taken to comb the rear. It was found that an additional 1,600 bayonets could be recruited in only one tank division.

Von Below testifies: "Kluge constantly talked about retreat. "Where does he want to go? the Fuhrer asked. We have no prepared rear positions. Troops must stay where they are." This was followed by accusations against the organization of the supply of ground forces. They have no winter clothing, no protection from the cold, and no means of adequate provision. But

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it was the Luftwaffe that was obliged to deliver everything  
necessary for the winter to our formations ...

Hitler was completely captured by the latest events on the Eastern Front and was constantly wondering how to help our troops. He repeated again and again: "They must stand where they are, and not take a single step back!" ...

On the night of December 16-17, Hitler finally decided to take over command of the ground forces. The Führer made this decision after deliberations that lasted a whole day. Schmundt welcomed the Führer's move, for it put an end to the daily struggle against Brauchitsch. Once again the thought flashed to entrust this post to Manstein or Kesselring. But Hitler rejected it, because the character of Manstein did not suit him, and Kesselring was just supposed to be the commander of the Luftwaffe formations in the Mediterranean. In view of the situation in Italy, the Führer did not want to make any sudden changes here.

On December 18, Hitler replaced the commander of the army group, Field Marshal von Bock, with Field Marshal von Kluge. The day passed in lively telephone conversations; in all of them there were words about the need to withdraw the troops of Army Group Center under strong pressure from the Russians. Hitler did not want to take a step back and ordered to hold the front line. In the period between Christmas and New Year, Guderian was dismissed at the request of Kluge. There had long been such contradictions between the two generals that they were incompatible. The Führer had many hours of daily discussions with Halder, the theme was always the same: hold on or retreat? In the intervals, palliative measures were taken to throw up new formations on special

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heavily threatened sectors of the front, while the front itself was looking for the last reserves. On the night of December 30-31, Hitler spoke on the telephone with Kluge for more than two hours. He wanted to withdraw the front line of his army group for 35 km. The Führer forbade and ordered again: not a step back. In doing so, he undoubtedly saved the situation, although severe crises still lay ahead in the coming days and weeks."

On December 11, 1941, at the height of the Battle of Moscow, speaking in the Reichstag on the occasion of declaring war on America, Hitler declared: "The American President and his plutocratic clique called us "have-nots" nations. It's right! But the "have-nots" also want to live, and, of course, they want to be sure that the "haves" will not steal their piece of black bread. You, my Party comrades, know my tireless striving to bring to a successful conclusion any struggle begun. You know my desire to do whatever is necessary to crush in such a struggle everything that must be crushed. In my first speech of September 1, 1939, I pledged that neither force of arms nor time would overcome Germany. I vouch for my adversaries - all the same, neither force of arms nor time will overcome us and, I will say more, no internal uncertainty will weaken us in the performance of our duty.

He also touched on the war with Russia: "The quick end of the campaign in the West meant that Moscow mistakenly counted on the immediate exhaustion of the German Empire. Nevertheless, she did not abandon her plans as a whole, but only postponed the fall. The summer of 1941 was ideal for the attack. A new invasion of the Mongols was ready to fall on Europe. Mr Churchill at that time



also promised that changes were coming in Britain's war

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against Germany. Now, in the most cowardly manner, he denies his words during a secret meeting in the British House of Commons in 1940 - that an important factor for the successful continuation and end of this war will be the entry of the Soviets into the war, at the latest in 1941, which will allow England to take the general offensive. Conscious of our obligations, last spring we watched the build-up of a military force that seemed to have inexhaustible human and material resources. Dark clouds have gathered over Europe. Today there are truly indisputable and authentic materials confirming the fact of the intention of the Russians to carry out an attack on us. In the same way, we also know the moment when this attack was to take place. Taking into account the enormous danger that we have realized in its entirety only now, I can only thank our Lord, who enlightened me at the right time and gave me the strength to do what I had to do. Millions of German soldiers can thank Him for saving their lives, and all of Europe for their own. Today I can say: if the wave of more than 20,000 tanks, hundreds of divisions, tens of thousands of guns, together with more than 10,000 aircraft, had not been stopped before pouring into the German Empire, Europe would have been swept away. Hitler called the number of Soviet military equipment close to reality. It is characteristic that he gave such an early date for the supposed Soviet attack on Europe only five months after the start of the Eastern campaign, and did not provide any specific data to justify the chosen date, no "authentic materials", except that summer is the most suitable time to start a war. But this argument could be

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against Germany as well - the attack on the USSR was also carried out in the summer, at the most convenient time. Hitler then had to present the actions of Germany as exclusively defensive, pre-emptive. In relation to the United States, the justification for declaring war was not very difficult: the Americans had been actively helping the British in the battle for the Atlantic for more than a year and began to openly help the Soviet Union after June 22, 1941. In addition, Germany's declaration of war on the United States was

the fulfillment of allied obligations towards Japan, which had already attacked America at Pearl Harbor. With regard to the USSR, there were no visual or formal grounds for a German attack. The Germans never managed to find indisputable evidence of Soviet plans to start a war against Germany as early as July 1941.

In the same speech, Hitler summed up the first campaign in the war against the Soviet Union: "The first two large encirclement operations near Bialystok and Minsk were completed on 10 July. We captured 524,000 prisoners, 3,552 tanks and 1,809 guns. By July 13, the Stalin line was broken through in almost all key areas. Smolensk fell on July 16 after a heavy battle, German and Romanian troops crossed the Dniester on July 19. The battle of Smolensk ended on August 6 after many encirclement operations. As a result, another 310,000 Russian prisoners were captured. In addition: in addition, according to our calculations, 5205 tanks and 5120 guns were captured or destroyed. Just three days later, the fate of another Soviet army group was sealed. On August 9, in the battle of Uman, another 103,000 Russian prisoners of war were captured, 517 tanks and 1,100 guns were captured or destroyed.

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Nikolaev fell on August 15, Kherson was taken on the 21st. On the same day the battle near Gomel ended, 84,000 people were captured, 144 tanks and 848 guns were captured or destroyed. The Soviet fortifications between Ilmen and Peipus were broken through on August 21, the crossings at Dnepropetrovsk passed into our hands on August 26. On the 28th, after heavy fighting, German troops entered Tallinn and Paldiski, while the Finns took Vyborg on the 20th. After we captured Petrokrepost on September 8, Leningrad was finally cut off from the south. On September 16, the Dnieper was forced; on September 18, Poltava passed into the hands of our soldiers. On September 19, German troops stormed the fortress of Kyiv, and on September 22, the conquest of Saaremaa was crowned with the capture of the capital of the island.

The battle near Kiev ended on 27 September. Endless columns of 665,000 prisoners marched west. 884 tanks and 3178 guns were surrounded and captured. Already on October 2, an operation began with the aim of breaking through in the central sector. Eastern Front, and by October 11 the battle on the Sea of Azov was successfully completed. Again 107,000 people were taken prisoner, 212 tanks and 672 guns were captured. On October 16, after a stubborn battle, German and Romanian troops entered Odessa. On October 18, the offensive launched on October 2 with the aim of breaking through to the

trawling sector of the Eastern Front, ended with a new, world-historic success. The result was 663,000 prisoners; partially destroyed, partially captured 1242 tanks, 5452 guns. On October 21, the capture of Dago Island ended; On October 24, the industrial center of Kharkov was taken. On October 28, in the course of heavy fighting, the entrance to the Crimea was finally blocked,

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and already on November 2, its capital, Simferopol, was taken by storm. On the 16th, a breakthrough was made in the Crimea all the way to Kerch.

On December 1, the total number of Soviet-Russian prisoners taken was 3,806,865, tanks destroyed or captured - 21,591, guns - 52,541 and aircraft - 17,332.

During the same period, 2,191 British aircraft were shot down, 4,170,611 were sunk by the navy and 2,346,180 gross tons by aircraft, for a total of 6,516,791.

These are just bare facts and dry numbers. But they will never be forgotten by history, they will never be erased from the memory of the German nation! Because behind these numbers are the victories, sacrifices, sufferings, heroism and readiness for self-sacrifice of millions of the best people of our people and countries allied to us. This struggle costs health and life, and the home front can hardly imagine this struggle.

In general, these figures are not far from the truth and correspond to post-war estimates of the loss of people and equipment. Mortar guns, for example, by the end of 1941, according to official figures, the Red Army lost 101,000. The number of aircraft given by Hitler practically coincides with the Soviet estimate, however, taking into account the aircraft lost for operational reasons. Close to the number of prisoners named by Hitler - 3.9 million people - also appeared in closed German documents in February 1942, and it was noted that 1.1 million of them survived the harsh winter of 1941. The rest died or joined collaborationist formations.

Hitler also assessed the German losses quite accurately: "From June 22 to December 1, the German army

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lost in this heroic struggle: 158,773 people were killed, 563,082 were wounded and 31,191 were missing. Air force losses: 3231 killed, 8453 wounded and 2028 missing. Navy: 510 killed, 252 wounded and 115 missing. Overall for the German armed forces: 162,314 killed, 571,767 wounded and 523,534 missing. In Halder's diary, the losses of the German land army for the period June 22 to November 26 are defined as 555,685 wounded, 156,575 killed and 50,952 missing. Probably, Hitler had the next report, for December 1, which was not reflected in Halder. I note that these data also correlate with the data of the centralized accounting of losses summarized at the end of the war.

The fact that it was Hitler's "stop order" that helped stabilize the front near Moscow is confirmed by many German generals. This famous order was issued on December 16, 1941, three days before Hitler assumed supreme command of the ground forces. He demanded from officers and generals "by his personal example ... to force the troops to defend their positions with fanatical tenacity, not paying attention to the enemy, breaking through on the flanks and rear." Halder summed up the main provisions of this order in the following way: "There can be no talk of withdrawal. Withdraw troops only from such sectors where the enemy has achieved a deep breakthrough. Creating rear lines is a fantasy. The front suffers from only one thing - the enemy has more soldiers. But he does not have a large amount of artillery. His situation is much worse than ours."

As early as December 6, at a meeting with the leadership of the ground forces, Hitler emphasized: "In principle, no

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no doubts or hesitations regarding the reduction of the front line. However, this new frontier must first be prepared, rifle trenches dug, furnaces installed, etc." General Günther Blummen Treat, the former chief of staff of the 4th Army of the Center Group, subsequently claimed, not without reason, that Hitler's "stop order" saved the German troops near Moscow from disaster: "His fanatical order obliging the troops to fight steadfastly on each position and in the most unfavorable conditions, was, of course, correct. Hitler instinctively realized that any retreat through snow and ice through

a few days will lead to the collapse of the entire front, and then the German army would suffer the same fate as Napoleon's Grand Army. The division was not allowed to retreat more than 5-10 kilometers in one night. More could not be demanded from the troops and horse-drawn transport in those incredibly difficult conditions. Since all the roads were covered with snow, they had to retreat across open country. After several nights of such a retreat, the soldiers were so exhausted that, stopping, they simply lay down on the snow and froze. In the rear there were no pre-prepared positions where the troops could withdraw ... Thus, for many weeks the battlefield slowly moved west. At the same time, a tough defense was combined with an organized withdrawal as rear defensive lines were created.

On January 11, 1942, Hitler, at a meeting with the leadership of the ground forces on the Soviet counteroffensive near Moscow, declared: "The struggle to win every day, every hour is a win in general, even if nervous tension is

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too big. If we succeed in stopping the troops, a great deed will be done."

And on January 15, 1942, Halder wrote in his diary: "The most difficult day (since the beginning of the war against Russia) ... The commander of Army Group Center repeatedly telephoned in despair ... hold back the onslaught of the enemy ... We were left with the only line to supply the 9th and 3rd tank armies. The consequences of this cannot be foreseen."

The comparatively successful retreat of the Wehrmacht in the winter of 1941 is evidenced by relatively small losses. If in November of the 41st the irretrievable losses of the German ground forces amounted to 32,800 people, then in December - 49,453, and in January 1942 - 54,500. Of these, on the Eastern Front from November 13 to December 10, died and went missing 18,180 soldiers and officers, in the period from December 10 to December 31 - 14,512 and from January 1 to January 31, 1942 - 25,189. Compared to the period of the German offensive, the average daily losses in December increased by only 1.2%, and in January — by 20.7%. For the most part, the Germans succeeded in maintaining the integrity of the Eastern Front, where the Wehrmacht experienced especially strong pressure in the central sector.

A number of myths are also associated with the Battle of Stalingrad. Perhaps the most important of them is that the Soviet command prepared a counter-offensive in complete secrecy, and the Germans knew nothing right up to the very beginning and did not even suspect what kind of danger threatened them.

In fact, already on November 7, the head of the intelligence department "Foreign armies - East" Reinhard Gehlen received a report from one of the agents that on November 4, 1942, Stalin, according to the agent, did not

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German intelligence, held a military council with the participation of 12 marshals and generals. It was decided at the council: if weather conditions permit, to start all planned offensive operations no later than November 15th. These operations were planned in the North Caucasus in the direction of Mozdok, on the middle Don against the 8th Italian and 3rd Romanian armies, in the region of the Rzhev salient, and also near Leningrad. This message was reported to Hitler, but he refused to withdraw the troops fighting at Stalingrad.

On November 12, 1942, Colonel Reinhard Gehlen, head of the "Foreign armies – East" department, reported: "Signs of a possible enemy going over to the offensive on the front in front of the allied armies are becoming more and more distinct. Along with the two areas we have already established for the concentration of its forces and means on the flanks of the 5th Romanian Army, where it can be considered already ready for offensive operations, another area of concentration of troops near Kalach is becoming more and more clear ... Signs of an imminent transition to there are no offensive operations here yet." A week later, the Soviet troops near Stalingrad went on the offensive.

But the Fuhrer refused to believe that the Red Army would soon inflict a powerful blow on the Wehrmacht. He believed that the 1942 campaign had seriously undermined its offensive capability. On November 8, 1942, speaking to the "old fighters" in Munich, Hitler proudly declared: "When bourgeois Germany fought, Germany, consisting of Marxists, bourgeois and the center, then, as an example, two Reichstag deputies died in the war - out of more than 2 million dead in total. The National Socialist Reichstag has already lost 39 deputies on the battlefield, out of a total loss of less than 350,000.